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QUEEN BERTHA

and her Times

RIVINGTONS

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QUEEN BERTHA

and her Times

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By E. H. HUDSON

AUTHOR OF "RECOLLECTIONS OF A VISIT TO BRITISH KAFFRARIA"

RIVINGTONS

London, Oxford, and Cambridge

1868


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PREFACE.

As a tribute to the memory of our first Christian queen, the name of Queen Bertha is given to this book, although it narrates the story of a period, rather than that of a person.

The period is an important one, as in tracing its course we fall in with the small beginnings of the most sacred, honourable, and useful institutions of our country, and with the ancient foundation-stones of some of our grandest edifices. Borrowing a figure of speech from Roger of Wendover, a monk who wrote of those early days, I may say, that I think myself fortunate in having been led to gather "the Flowers of History" from ground which was first broken by Gregory of Tours (Queen Bertha's contemporary) and by our venerable Bede, and which has been fertilized and embellished by such writers as Augustin Thierry, Sharon Turner, Stanley, and Hook. I have also availed myself of some of the valuable historical relics collected by Montalembert, and lately given to the

world in his *Monks of the West*:—"Relics floating on a Sea of Legends."

The descriptions of the domestic manners, and of the homes of the Saxons, are those of Wright and Thrupp, and the costumes are Fairholt's.

The most prominent features of the period form part of the history of the Church; and this is chiefly given from "The Landing of Augustine," in Dean Stanley's *Memorials of Canterbury*, and from Dean Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury;* and I desire to express my grateful acknowledgments to those authors for permission to extract, from their excellent works, passages which could be woven into a narrative adapted to young readers, to whom especially I offer *Queen Bertha and her Times.*

My thanks are also due to the Rev. J. Puckle, M.A., Vicar of St. Mary's, Dover, for liberty to quote from *Church and Fortress of Dover Castle;* to Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., for assistance kindly rendered while this compilation has been in course of publication; and to J. R. Planché, Esq., Rouge Croix Poursuivant.

FOLKESTONE, *Feb.* 1868.

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QUEEN BERTHA

and her Times

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"The Julian spear
A way first open'd, and with Roman chains
The tidings came of Jesus crucified;
They came—they spread—the weak, the suffering hear,
Receive the faith, and in the hope abide."
WORDSWORTH, "Ecclesiastical Sonnet."

TO undertake the task of tracing even a slight biographical sketch of Queen Bertha's life, would be to undertake an impossibility, for history does not furnish a clear outline. Nevertheless, it tells us quite enough to show that, as long as England is a nation, she should love and honour the memory of her first Christian queen. The silence deepens our respect, for all the biographical compositions, and the narratives of those early times, are more or less imbued with absurd or revolting

superstitions; and yet it is from such sources that the historian must derive his materials, when he begins his work at the commencement of modern history, on the confines of a pre-historic age.

We should rejoice in the fact, that our Queen Bertha's name has wonderfully escaped all such legendary lore and fulsome flattery; that the title of Saint has never been appended to it[1]. We should remember her name and her example, for she was the first who showed our Saxon forefathers what Christianity is. She was brought hither by Divine Providence "to make ready the way of the Lord." We may know much more about others who lived in later times, but let us not pass over Queen Bertha.

As no connected memoir can be compiled, I have simply given an outline of the history, and drawn a picture of the period in which she lived. In the foreground of that picture I have placed Ethelbert, King of Kent, Queen Bertha, and Augustine, the Missionary Bishop who baptized Ethelbert. As a background to bring out the prominent objects and details of the picture, I have slightly sketched preceding history, beginning on the hazy, indistinct horizon which separates the fabulous from the authentic.

Having been led from the history of the Saxon Conquest into the history of the Church, I have

[1] We read of a St. Bertha; she was not the Queen of Kent, but an abbess of Blangy in Artois, who died about the year 725.

preferred giving the latter in the very words of authors fully competent to send forth information on so important a subject; and as I have extracted passages from Dr. Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," I think it well to give also a portion of his "Introduction," wherein he refers to the establishment of the See of Canterbury. He writes, "In tracing the present Church of England back to the Italian Mission and the See of Canterbury founded by Ethelbert, and of which Augustine was the first Archbishop, we are not forgetful of the existence or the claims of the British Church, or of the Celtic Christians, to whom, no less than to Augustine and his followers, we are indebted for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon race. Who were the missionaries by whom the Celts, or first known inhabitants of these islands, were originally converted, as the event occurred in a pre-historic period, it is impossible to decide."

Although we cannot ascertain who were the first missionaries who came to Britain, yet we know that theirs must have been a hard and dangerous labour of love, for they had to contend against the heathenism of the Celtic Druids on the one hand, and against the mythology of pagan Rome on the other. The Druids formed a most powerful class, for they were at once the priests, the law-givers, and the teachers of the people. They believed in One Supreme Being, and held the immortality of the soul; but their ideas on that subject were most fanciful. They taught that the soul began to

exist in the meanest insect, proceeded through all the lower orders of existence, ascending at each new birth to a higher form, till, having collected all powers and properties of animal life, it arrived at the human stage. It was then endowed with the knowledge of good and evil, and with power to choose between them. The soul, when thus elevated, became responsible, and if it had chosen evil, it was condemned to an inferior grade of animal life, in proportion to the debasement whereto it had debased itself; but they who had chosen the better part, passed into a higher state of existence, whence it was not possible to fall, and where the soul increased in knowledge and happiness through all eternity [2].

At first sight these seem to be innocent imaginations; but when men put the conceptions of their own fanciful minds forward, assuming that they are truth itself, they let loose a well-spring of evil which rushes on to join other streams more polluted, and thus the religion of the Druids became more and more debased. The most dangerous doctrine they propagated, was that which concerned the Evil Spirit, in whom they also believed. They taught their followers to propitiate the Evil One, in order that he might be induced to guard them from misfortunes. They worshipped the Author of Good and the Author of Evil under the symbols of the Sun and the Serpent. Was it not a foreshadowing of that spirit which now bows down to the "Prince

[2] Southey's "Book of the Church."

of this World," because men are as much afraid of losing the sunshine of the world, as they are of losing the light of God's countenance? The religion of the Druids degenerated until it became utterly false and cruel, until all that was done by the grey-haired priest under the spreading oak became so awful, that we turn away from descriptions of it with horror.

Bishop Stillingfleet and others have collected many ancient authorities to support their conjecture, that the Gospel was first preached in Britain by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It appears highly probable that St. Paul visited this country, but no decided proof that he did so has ever been discovered. In the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, we read that St. Paul "taught the whole world righteousness, and for that end travelled to the utmost bounds of the West." This statement seems to favour the pleasant supposition; but the peninsula of Spain and Portugal may have been understood by that expression, in those early times when Spain assumed her national motto "Ne plus ultra," There is nothing beyond.

An interesting tradition, which may be founded on fact, has come down to us, concerning Bran the Blessed, the father of Caractacus. It is said, that the old man was taken as a captive with his son to Rome; that there he became acquainted with St. Paul, who was his contemporary prisoner; that the aged Celtic chief was converted by the Holy Apostle; that they were both released about the same

time, and came to Britain together; that Bran lived to a great age, and that he and the noble Caractacus, who also embraced Christianity, were instrumental in converting many of their fellow-countrymen.

Gildas the Wise, the most ancient British historian, states that Christianity was introduced into Britain before Boadicea was defeated by the Romans, A.D. 61 [3].

But Gildas is not reliable authority; he lived a century and a half before the Venerable Bede, who is our earliest trustworthy historian. We know very little about Gildas, and the exaggeration of his style has tended to destroy his reputation as an historian. He is said to have been the son of a Celtic prince who fled into Wales to avoid submitting to the Saxons. The historian, then a young man, formed a party of refugees, and went to Armorica, or Brittany, as it was thenceforth often called, being a British colony. That corner of the European continent is a beautiful country; and perhaps no land is richer in poetical legends, most of which throw a glimmering light on this portion of the dark ages, and help to keep up some remembrance of those "Pilgrim Fathers" of the sixth century. Gildas built a monastery there, which became well known, as it was the residence of Peter Abelard before he removed to the diocese of Troyes, and erected the Paraclete [4]. The old British historian spent the latter part of his life in

[3] See Appendix, Note I., "On our Earliest Historians."

[4] Abelard lived in the early part of the twelfth century.

Wales; he lived as a monk at Glastonbury abbey, where he wrote in bitterness of spirit. His chronicles are dismal in the extreme, but his language is so strong as to weaken the impression intended to be produced on the reader. He laments over the desolations caused by the Picts and Scots, the civil wars, and the Saxons; but tells us that after all these calamities, there were twenty-eight cities standing, and many well-fortified castles, and that corn was abundantly produced. Gildas died at Glastonbury, A.D. 570, the year in which king Ethelbert married Bertha and brought her to this country.

The Celtic kings and warriors, and the monks and clergy who constituted the British Church, had retreated to the west of the island, and had entrenched themselves behind mountain peaks, gorges, and defiles, which were inaccessible to the military operations of that day.

The Celtic Church had been planted in Ireland by missionaries from Gaul. Foremost among these stands St. Patrick, who deserves the eternal gratitude of the Irish nation. We learn on trustworthy authority, that in very early days the Church in Ireland was indeed renowned for the excellence of its institutions, for the piety and learning of its clergy and monks, and especially for its missionary zeal.

In the year 565, Columba, a Celtic prince of royal birth, accompanied by twelve companions, crossed from Ireland in a boat made of ox-hide

stretched over a framework of osier. They fixed their settlement at Hy, one of the Hebrides, afterwards called Icomkill, or the island of Columba of the Cells. From an assemblage of huts formed of rough-hewn wood and branches of trees thatched with reeds, a monastery arose. The rustic buildings must have been picturesque, for they were both supported and ornamented by climbing plants, especially ivy, which was trained to interlace the wood-work and branches[4].

"In this retreat the Holy Scriptures were studied, and books were multiplied by transcription. They conducted their mission, not only by sending out preachers from their own body, but also by placing similar fraternities in different parts of the country, thus providing for their converts a continual supply of instruction and the means of grace[5]."

Nothing now remains which Columba looked upon, not a fragment of his monastery, nor of the church in which he worshipped for more than forty years, and in which he died. A mouldy stone is pointed to as St. Columba's tomb, but we know that his ashes are not there; they were removed to Ireland.

The little island itself, its green fields, shining white shore, rough rock, slippery with sea-weed, over which the restless waves for ever foam and

[4] Columba was born at Gratan, in a wild district of Donegal, Dec. 7, 521. He spent much of his early life at Derry, to which place he was deeply attached.

[5] Dr. Hook.

murmur,—Iona itself is Columba's memorial. We feel that it belongs to him and his brethren, even while we look on the venerable and curious relics of later periods—the cathedral, the nunnery, and those hoary crosses and pillars which speak of other men famous in their generations.

Forty kings of Scotland are interred there. Macbeth is the last; he lies by the murdered Duncan. Icomkill, the Isle of Cells, is now the Isle of Tombs, haunted by the spirits of the poets, whose thoughts have not perished. They still speak to us of mighty ones laid low beneath the rank grass which we tread under foot—Lords of the Isles!—those little gems of islands which seem made for nothing but to catch the sunbeams as they lie scattered along the coast of "woody Morven," or beneath the "sombre peaks of Mull." We hear the voices which Ossian heard upon the breeze, whispering about years that are gone; and bards of later ages inspire us to rejoice in Nature's beauty, and impart to us the feelings which stirred their souls, when they looked on this primitive asylum of British religion and learning.

The noble Celtic monastery at Bangor Iscoed, in Flintshire, was quite as efficient an institution as that at Iona; at one time three thousand monks resided there. It stood in a valley, and was surrounded by a wall, through which there were two entrance gates, a mile distant from each other. This magnificent building was destroyed by Ethelfrid, the savage Anglo-Saxon king of Northumbria.

Its library, a very large one, the collection of ages, and the repository of the most precious documents, was entirely consumed. Therefore the early history of the British Church is to this day involved in obscurity; yet we have positive proof of its continued existence as a branch of the Catholic or Universal Church of Christ.

It is recorded that three British prelates, the Bishops of London, York, and Lincoln, were present at the Council of Arles, A.D. 314; and also that British bishops attended the Council of Sardica, A.D. 347, and that of Ariminum, A.D. 354. The words of Jerome, who wrote in the fourth century, are remarkable. Jerome declared the Churches of Rome and Britain to be of the same condition, and merit, and pastoral authority.

Nevertheless our islands did not escape the contagious errors which spread throughout Christendom in the last days of Imperial Rome, when corruptions of every kind prevailed both in religious and secular affairs. All the people of Europe were more or less contaminated. Even those who prided themselves on maintaining independence, did not also maintain truthfulness, simplicity, and freedom from the bondage of superstition. Southey tells us that members of the British Church performed the pilgrimage to Palestine, urged by no higher motive than the desire to behold a living idol, a maniac in Syria, who, under a burning sun, passed his life on the top of a lofty column, and vied with the fanatics of India in the folly and perseverance with

which he inflicted voluntary tortures upon himself[6]. Certainly there was quite as much superstition of every sort in the Churches of Gaul and Britain, as in the Church of Rome, and in each we find equally striking examples of genuine faith and personal excellence.

To form a just conception of the character and strength of the British Celts, we should remember how Britain comported herself through her first great struggle with Imperial Rome. Cæsar assures us that he found the Britons by no means contemptible adversaries; and an eminent historian of our own day has remarked, that of all the nations subdued by the Romans, it is the Britons alone, whose resistance had a history, for it lasted through two centuries. The Italians, the Gauls, and the Spaniards, all allowed themselves to be crushed and overthrown without a struggle[7].

"Of all the nations conquered by Rome," says Montalembert, "the Britons were those who resisted her arms the longest, and borrowed the least from her laws and manners. . . . The noble Celtic race had produced a succession of remarkable personages, who, thanks to Tacitus, shine with an imperishable light amid the degradation of the world—the glorious prisoner Caractacus, who spoke to the Emperor in language worthy of the

6 "Book of the Church."

7 Guizot, quoted by Montalembert.

finest days of the Republic, Boadicea the heroic queen, and Galgacus the Pictish hero of the Grampians. . . . At the same time, Britain had not passed with impunity through three centuries and a half of Imperial bondage. As in Gaul, as in all the countries subjugated by the Roman Empire, dependence and corruption had ended by enervating, softening, and ruining the vigorous people. The sons of those whom Cæsar could not conquer, and who had struggled heroically against Claudius and Nero, soon began to think themselves incapable of making head against the barbarians[8]." We all know how earnestly they besought the Romans to come back and protect the land they had abandoned. "The barbarians have driven us to the sea; the sea drives us back upon the barbarians: we must be slain or drowned." We all know how the weakness, timidity, and imprudence of the Celts brought about a second great struggle—the Saxon invasion.

But the Saxons found Britain in a very different state from that in which Cæsar had found it. For nearly four hundred years, it had been a province of the Roman Empire; fortresses had been built all over the country, which were garrisoned by Roman officers and soldiers; stone-masons and artisans had been brought over; it had become colonized by Roman families and their attendants; Roman governors had resided on the island.

One of these, Julius Agricola, was a man who

[8] Montalembert's "Monks of the West."

aimed at something higher than self-aggrandizement; he endeavoured to benefit the province, and to elevate the people over whom he was appointed to rule. When he first commanded in Britain, he was fortunate in doing so under Vespasian, who had a particular regard for our island, although no portion of the extensive Empire was neglected by him, and in whose reign Britain was discovered to be an island. Agricola sent a small fleet quite round, which came safely back and went into port at Sandwich, having met with no disaster, and having subdued the Orkneys on its way. Agricola extended the dominion of Rome by his victory gained on the Grampian Hills. He strengthened the fortifications, and built a line of military stations from the Clyde to the Frith of Forth. He governed during the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and was as attentive to all things conducive to the blessings of peace, as to his military duties. We have a full and pleasing account of Agricola, which may be partly attributable to the fact, that Tacitus, who had married his daughter, wrote his history.

Rome in those days could not appreciate her noblest sons. Agricola was recalled; and after suffering great injustice, he died in retirement. For many years after he left, Britain enjoyed peace, which was only disturbed by some seditions among the Roman legions quartered there, and by some usurpations of the Imperial power and dignity by the Roman governors.

The provinces of the Empire had no separate constitutions; they were not authorized to govern or to legislate for themselves. The authority was every where in the hands of the Senate and the Emperor. Romans were brought to inhabit the conquered lands; but Rome had lost her own nationality, in destroying that of other nations. Newly acquired territory was parcelled out among colonies of almost every people, who had been subdued by the Roman arms. Britain presented a strange assemblage of races, the ignorant Celt, who tilled the soil, occupying the lowest estate [9].

On the other hand, the most educated and deserving natives of the provinces, though they lost possession, were admitted to all the privileges of free-born Romans, and they were bound to serve and to fight for the Empire, not for their native lands in particular. All the promising youths were draughted off to serve in foreign wars. The magistrates only at the expiration of their office assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they were filled in succession by members of all the principal families.

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over the national manners, that they were careful to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue, which was universally adopted in Britain. The Celtic language was preserved only in the mountains or among the peasants.

[9] Wright's "Celt, Roman, and Saxon."

We are told that the grandsons of those Gauls who fought against Julius Cæsar, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the Senate of Rome [10].

Doubtless, it was thus also with the Celts of Britain. The pathways to fortune and fame might be pursued by those who had been brought into them by special merit or favour. But these were the few, not the many; the bulk of the Celtic population was bred up to submission and servitude. They must have felt the loss of independence, even while making progress under a superior power. The whole appearance of Britain became gradually changed, as towns were built up with commodious houses and market-places, as public buildings, palaces, and temples arose, adorned with graceful pillars, porticoes, galleries, and Mosaic pavements. And the Roman roads which crossed the island in different directions were so substantially made, that traces of them may yet be found [1].

The Roman Wall, called by Spartianus "the greatest glory of Severus's reign," is now thought to have been constructed by Hadrian [2]. It seems scarcely probable, that Severus should have raised a barrier from Solway Frith to the mouth of the Tyne, when he had conquered territory northward of that boundary. Severus spent his last days at

[10] See Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

[1] Some Roman roads serve as foundations to modern roads.

[2] Septimus Severus may have repaired Hadrian's Wall.

York, surrounded by magnificence, soothed by luxuries, homaged by his courtiers. Yet they were unhappy days: his bodily strength was failing; he was grieving over the misconduct of his son Caracalla, perplexing his mind over the vanity of those objects which he had most earnestly pursued through life, and over the darkness of death, which he could not get beyond. He remarked, "I have been all that a man can be, but that is of no service to me now." When he was dying, he ordered his urn to be brought before him—the urn which was ready to receive his ashes when they should be gathered off the funeral pyre, after the flames had done their work. "Little urn," he said, "thou wilt soon contain what the world itself can no longer hold."

During the reign of Diocletian, the eleventh and last persecution of the Christians occurred, which exceeded all the former in severity: a countless number then joined "the noble army of martyrs." It was the only persecution which extended to Britain. St. Alban was the first to suffer, and he is therefore distinguished as our proto-martyr. He was a native of Verulam, one of the strongest, grandest, and most populous cities of the Roman period.

Alban was of a noble and wealthy family. In his youth he had travelled to Rome to improve himself in learning and in all the polite arts, and on his return, he resided in his native place as one of its principal citizens. Though a stranger to the Christian faith, he was hospitable and compas-

sionate, and this good natural disposition led him to shelter Amphibalus, a Christian missionary who was fleeing from the cruel persecution.

Alban attentively observed the conduct of his guest, and listened to his words, which fell like good seed upon a heart not altogether unprepared to receive it.

After he had concealed the missionary for some days, information reached the Roman Governor that a Christian teacher was hidden in Alban's house, and soldiers were despatched thither to make diligent search; but by Alban's assistance Amphibalus had made his escape. They had exchanged clothes, that the preacher might more safely proceed in that disguise to carry on the news of salvation to others. Alban, accepting the truth in simplicity of heart, thought that the life of that good man was of more value to the Church of Christ than his own. He appeared boldly before the soldiers, clad in the long woollen garment of the Christian pastor—a loose kind of dress, worn by all classes of persons, as being easy and convenient.

The soldiers were so provoked at having been duped, that they dragged Alban into a heathen temple, to be judged for the breach of their intolerant law. They said to him, "As you have chosen to conceal a sacrilegious person, the punishment which he should have suffered shall fall upon you, in case you refuse to comply with the worship of our religion." Alban answered, "I am a Christian;" and when, according to the usual form,

his name was asked, he replied, "My name is Alban, and I worship the true and living God who created all things." The judge, enraged by the firmness of the confessor, who unflinchingly endured scourging and torture, at length ordered him to be beheaded. An immense multitude of people gathered to behold the execution, which took place on a green wooded hill that sloped gently down to the river—a pleasant hill,

"By Nature deck'd for holiest sacrifice."

There the leader of all the British martyrs glorified God in his death.

A Roman soldier was so struck by Alban's noble conduct, that he chose to suffer with him, rather than incur the guilt of being his executioner. Both the Briton and the Roman were, as we may say, baptized in their own blood; and their liberated spirits ascended together from the astonished crowd of human spectators, to that "great cloud of witnesses" who rejoice over the victories of the saints.

Deep must have been the impression made on those who looked upon the scene, for it was so vividly described, that even the field-flowers that basked in the sunshine of that midsummer's day more than fifteen hundred years ago are not yet forgotten. The little river Ver, a branch of the Colne, flows on between old Verulam and new St. Alban's, and the Abbey Church now marks the spot where Alban won the martyr's crown.

How impotent are those who fight against the Almighty! how short-lived are their vainglorious triumphs! Diocletian erected two lofty pillars in Spain, on which his name and titles were displayed, with inscriptions declaring that he had extended the Roman Empire from East to West, had abolished the superstition of Christ, and extended the worship of the gods. He also caused a medal to be struck to commemorate the destruction of Christianity, the extinction of the name of Christian. Yet even when those boastful words were being graven in marble and stamped in gold, a Roman destined to be greater than Diocletian, was ready to do the part assigned to him towards the fulfilment of that promise to the Church of Christ, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Constantine, the son of Constantius and Helena, was rising up like another Cyrus, empowered to set God's people free.

Several of the most infamous promoters of that great persecution died awful deaths, suffering more excruciating agony of mind and body than they had inflicted on others. Some were led to see the dreadful error into which they had fallen; and when pressed by sickness and the fear of death, they published edicts in favour of Christianity, thus striking the first blows against heathen persecution. Diocletian abdicated the imperial throne, and spent the last seven years of his life in retirement. His last days were very miserable, for he was persecuted

by relentless enemies. It has been said that he committed suicide by poison, but there is more reason to believe he died of a broken heart. He who had dared to boast that he had extinguished Christianity, lived to see it the religion of the Roman Empire, for he survived Constantine's conversion, and died about ten years after he had set up those pillars in Spain.

Constantine the Great was the protector of the Church before he embraced the true religion, for he was averse to tyrannical intolerance; and he seems to have been impressed by the bright instances of Christian heroism displayed by many of the soldiers in the Roman army. His was a mind capable of appreciating unflinching fidelity.

After the Emperor had been baptized, Christianity spread rapidly throughout his vast dominions, although it was a harassing time for the Church, as Constantine was very ignorant on important points of doctrine, and self-willed in his ignorance. He listened to the heretics as Cyrus listened to the Samaritans; and so the building up of Sion's walls was hindered. But the Gospel was preached, and churches arose in all the provinces. Before that time there had been Roman Christians in Britain who made converts, as we have seen in the case of St. Alban, and Celtic missionaries had also been active and vigilant; but their flocks were scattered, and the folds in which they gathered them together were rudely constructed and few in number.

But when the Romans, as a christianized nation,

began to build churches, they generally did it so substantially that the foundations could not be moved. When the walls were battered and broken, and the timber consumed, they could scarcely be destroyed beyond the possibility of restoration; and the Saxons, those ruthless invaders who reduced them to ruins, rebuilt most of them: but they chiefly used wood, and their workmanship was so unskilful, that very little of it is now remaining.

We distinguish Roman masonry by the layers of flat, bright red tiles; the walls are constructed of stone or flint, bonded at certain intervals by these layers of tiles, and the mortar being mixed with small pebbles, shells, or pounded brick, is almost as hard as stone.

Yet Rome herself was falling when she built those indestructible edifices. Her people had degenerated, her living stones were falling apart, disorganized, undermined, and weakened by corruption of every sort—by enervating luxury, by sinful pleasure, by justice which had separated from integrity; and though she named the name of Christ, she did not depart from iniquity. Therefore her luxurious palaces, her amphitheatres, her halls of justice, and her churches, were given to other races of men.

According to Daniel's interpretation of the grand prophetic dream, the Kingdom was divided, and the toes of the great Image were beginning to appear. Hordes of northern nations were conquering and breaking up the enormous dominions of the Fourth

Empire, settling themselves, and forming independent kingdoms.

Rome, trembling for her capital, felt that she must concentrate her forces. Britain was set free, but was not in a condition to benefit by freedom. The superior portion of her Celtic population had been Romanized; and the Romanized Celt, who had been highly educated, who had seen the world while commanding in the imperial army, or while holding some civil appointment, had indeed been nurtured in pride; but his was not the pride of birth. He gloried in being a Roman, and cared not to stay in the land of his uncivilized forefathers, when the Romans departed. The Celts who remained attached to the soil, were chiefly men of inferior position and education, who became rulers and legislators because there was no superior class[2].

Doubtless there were individual instances of devoted patriotism among the Celtic princes and warriors; but their strength as a nation was broken, they could not stand against men of their own race. The Picts and Scots were also Celts, but they had maintained independence, and had never contracted luxurious habits. They were still barbarians, wild and ignorant, as were the Saxons, who joined in the conflict and obtained the mastery over the greater part of the island.

[2] It will be remembered that St. Paul claimed the privileges of a Roman—"And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born" (Acts xxii. 28).

It has been said of the Saxon, that "under the brute the free man, and also the man of heart, might always be discovered[3]." Their moral and domestic character was superior to that of the Romans, and in that respect they were, as we shall see, superior to some of the Teutonic nations; and when they came to Britain they brought with them the rudiments of political blessings.

They came to this country looking upon its inhabitants as enemies, whom they were determined to overcome; their pagan religion taught them to be cruel and relentless; the Gospel of Peace had not been proclaimed to them; but, while they were establishing their kingdoms, they received the call to repent and believe. They heard, they listened, they accepted the inestimable blessing offered; and then, with the help of the missionaries, they laid the foundations of that national Constitution and of those peculiar customs to which Great Britain chiefly owes the social progress which she has steadily made, and the position which she maintains among the nations. "By the Grace of God," which she stamps upon her gold and silver, may she maintain allegiance to the Most High! and by that Grace may she consider the warnings of history, which tell how nations rise and fall!

[3] Montalembert, quoting Taine.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SAXONS, AND THE CONQUEST OF KENT.

"There are five great landings in English history, each of vast importance—the landing of Julius Cæsar, which first revealed us to the civilized world, and the civilized world to us; the landing of Hengist and Horsa, which gave us our English forefathers and our English characters; the landing of Augustine, which gave us our English Christianity; the landing of William the Conqueror, which gave us our Norman aristocracy; the landing of William the Third, which gave us our free Constitution."—"*Memorials of Canterbury*," *by Stanley.*

THE Roman Empire was destroyed by three great nations—the Goths, the Tartars or Huns, and the Teutons. Each of these was subdivided into a great number of lesser nations or tribes. It is supposed that these three parent stocks all belonged to one of the great ancient races of the earth called Scythians, that they originally dwelt near together in the north-east of Asia, but gradually moved westward. They are thought to have been migrating towards Europe at a time when Babylonia and Persia were the dominant powers of the then

known world, and when central Europe was about as little known as central Africa now is.

The Saxons were a branch of the Teutonic family. Ptolemy of Alexandria, an astronomer and geographer who flourished at the end of the first, and beginning of the second century, mentions one of the many Scythian tribes which had settled in Europe as the Saxones; and that brief statement is supposed to be the first appearance of our Teutonic ancestors' name upon the page of history. The name is said to have been derived from the *seax*, a short sword used by the tribes which settled on the shores of the Baltic, on the banks of the Weser, the Elbe, and the Rhine. It seems more probable that the sword derived its name from the people who used it, than that the people took their name from the sword.

Whatever be the derivation of the name, it certainly was very generally applied to a number of separate states which had probably all sprung from one parent stock; therefore there was a strong family resemblance between them, and they all told the same traditional stories about Odin their deified hero, from whom all the Scandinavian and Saxon chieftains traced their descent.

The Edda, their sacred book, relates that Odin once lived in a city to the east of the river Tanais (or Don); or that he moved first into Russia, thence into Saxony, and afterwards on to the Scandinavian peninsula.

These traditions agree with the authentic his-

tories, which tell us that about that time the war between the Romans and Mithridates, king of Pontus, shook the southern border-lands of Europe and Asia, and scattered several barbarian tribes.

The language of these various tribes was very nearly, though not quite the same: thus, their hero-god was called Odin by the Scandinavian tribes, Woden by the Saxons. They all carried the round shield, and threw the spear or dart, which was so light that a boy of twelve years old could hurl it. Being then equal to the most important duty which that state of society required of a man, he thenceforward enjoyed most of manhood's privileges, and was looked upon as belonging, not to his father, but to the state.

The tribes were continually quarrelling and fighting, as is usually the case with all uncivilized nations. From the songs of the Scalds we learn that the most honourable way of procuring a wife, was to choose the sister or daughter of some deadly foe, and to carry her off by force. And this notion of honour long continued more attractive to some youthful minds than the fashion which succeeded, when the suitor offered, not his hand to the lady, but his cattle to her father, and she who was the principal party concerned had no voice in the matter at all. Thrupp tells us that this system afforded an admirable field for manœuvring parents: their intrigues became so notorious, that, when legislation had made some little progress, the law came to the assistance of the over-persuaded

bachelor by declaring that, if the maiden's attractions had been deceitfully represented, the husband was at liberty to return her to her father, and to claim the animals which he had given in exchange, or an equivalent. If, on the contrary, he felt happily contented to conclude the arrangement, he presented his lady with a token of regard.

Although this custom originated in the barbarous notion that the purchaser should give an acknowledgment that he was satisfied with his bargain, yet we can imagine that idea to have been succeeded by a nobler feeling; that the gift became the expression of generous consideration, and was given and received in mutual affection, for we are repeatedly assured that in those very early times the Saxons were distinguished by their domestic virtues.

They were a restless people, always hunting in the forests, or roving on the seas, and large numbers of them emigrated far from their birthplaces; yet one of their oldest customs, mixed up though it was with heathen superstition, shows that love of home which seems to have been innate in the race.

When a family left their native shores in the rudely-constructed boats of timber and ox-hide, which were so skilfully managed, they took with them the door-post of the old home. As they approached the land to which they were bound, they threw the post overboard, watched it drifting to land, and where it stranded they disembarked. It often happened that a family party went out to

join relations or friends who had gone before, in which case this little ceremony, which excited sympathy, did but add to the heartiness of the meeting. The old door-post was conveyed to the spot where it was to wear away amid new surroundings, as a cherished memorial, a link between the present and the past. But if they had to contend for the ground on which their door-post landed, they fought manfully, believing that the gods of their forefathers had given them that spot.

These heathens groped after that fundamental truth expressed by the Psalmist, "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it;" for those who built houses were instructed to sing a certain song addressed to their gods, which would ensure a blessing on the house. The smith, a very important personage in the earliest age of civilization, had a song by which the glowing iron beneath his hammer became a breastplate which no earthly weapon could penetrate, and another by which the sword received a charmed edge which nothing could resist. The boat-builder also commended his work to the gods, or at least he had some sort of belief that it could not be well done without supernatural assistance. And when one of their frail vessels was launched, a wild chant arose from the shore, a vocal outburst from the depths of ignorance; yet even in that darkness we may trace a faint glimmer of light beyond.

Fidelity to their chiefs, justice, chastity, valour, and cruelty, are said to have characterized the

Saxons. They dealt fairly by their friends, unflinchingly executed vengeance on the enemies of their family or nation, bore hardships, and maintained courage even unto death, that they might hereafter rejoice and feast in the halls of Valhalla, with Woden and his triumphant warriors.

How awfully sad it is to detain even a passing thought on the spiritual state in which our brave old Saxon ancestors lived and died! But Eternal Truth shines on, though earth-born clouds may hide it—it is only forgotten by man. "All the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him." How much meaning there is in that word "remember!" The Saviour chose that Psalm to comfort Him as He hung upon the Cross; surely it may comfort us respecting all those who do not hear the Gospel tidings while they sojourn upon earth. We, too, may rest satisfied with the assurance, "The kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the nations."

On the borders of the Lake Malar, between Stockholm, the present capital of Sweden, and the old city of Upsala, the traveller's attention is still directed to some vestiges of an age long gone by. Tradition says that there stood the palace of Odin, the royal seat of his extensive empire, the earthly type of glorious Valhalla.

During the fourth and fifth centuries, many tribes went forth from the shores washed by the waves of

the Baltic Sea and the German Ocean; the Franks, the Danes, the Norse or Northmen, afterwards called Normans, and the Saxons. Three large tribes came to our island, all included under the general name of Saxons. The Jutes, from Jutland; the Angles, from the countries we now call Schleswig and Holstein; and the Saxons proper, who had spread themselves along the coasts through which the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Weser discharge their waters, and round the Zuyder Zee. In Holstein there is a district still called Anglen, that is the real Old England [1].

Even when Britain was a Roman province, the Saxon pirates infested the southern and eastern coasts of the island so much, that an officer was appointed to guard those coasts, who was called "The Count of the Saxon shores."

Those plunderers who came from over the sea in their rude boats of wicker-work and ox-hide were looked on as a fierce, irresistible people; and they became still bolder when they were no longer checked by the superior power of Rome. Yet, strange to say, Vortigern, the paramount king, who had been invested with authority over the other petty kings or chiefs of Britain, did not perceive the danger of soliciting the aid of the Saxons to drive back the Picts and Scots, those still more savage enemies, who had broken through the Roman Walls, devastated the country, and

[1] Pictorial History of England.

slaughtered the Celtic population so terribly, that it is said in some parts there were not enough living men left to bury the dead.

In this emergency the rulers of Britain agreed to Vortigern's proposal that the aid of the Saxons should be sought. Messengers were despatched without delay, and on the ocean they fell in with three Saxon vessels cruising in search of plunder. Hengist, the commander of the piratical band, instantly steered for the coast of Kent, and they landed at Ebbs Fleet, in the Isle of Thanet, not far from the ancient town of Sandwich. Vortigern, and others equally short-sighted, were delighted to welcome their allies sooner than they had expected them.

Hengist was accompanied by Horsa his brother; they were high-born Jutes, for their great-grandfather Wecta was a son of Woden. Roger of Wendover gives their genealogy, and relates a conversation which took place when the Saxon chiefs stood before Vortigern.

The king questioned them concerning their religion: they explained their creed, and told him that their forefathers had dedicated the fourth day of the week to their great ancestor Woden, the sixth to Frea his wife, and the other days to the Sun and Moon, and to heroes who had lived in ancient times, "and who now govern the world," said the Saxon. "I grieve much," replied Vortigern, "for your belief, or rather for your unbelief; but I am exceedingly rejoiced at your

coming, which is most opportune for my urgent necessities. For I am pressed by my enemies on every side, and if ye will share with me the toil of fighting, ye shall remain in my kingdom, where ye shall be had in honour, and enriched with lands and possessions." Old Roger goes on to tell us that the king collected his troops, and crossed the Humber to meet the Picts and Scots, and that there was not much need for the Britons to fight, because the Saxons fought so manfully that they immediately routed the enemy, who before their arrival had become habituated to conquest.

Having gained so great a victory by their aid, Vortigern was lavish in gifts and promises. The Saxon was acute enough to see how he could take advantage of the king's gratitude: he seems also to have perceived that the Britons began to suspect the fidelity of their allies, and to blame their monarch's unguarded conduct; for he thus addressed Vortigern, "My lord, thy enemies vex thee on all sides, and say they will depose thee, and bring Aurelius Ambrosius from Armorica, and make him king in thy room. If it please thee, therefore, let us send into our country, and invite over more soldiers, that our number may be increased." The king agreed to the proposal, and bade him send into Germany for speedy aid. Straightway messengers were despatched, who brought back with them eighteen vessels full of chosen soldiers. They also brought over Hengist's daughter Rowena, whose bright beauty and fasci-

nating manners seduced Vortigern into committing even greater imprudences than he had hitherto been guilty of [2]. His subjects grew discontented and rebellious, and he became harassed by difficulties with which his mind was unequal to cope.

The old chroniclers paint Vortigern's character in very dark colours: they are indignant with him for not following the advice of his counsellors, and for not heeding the warnings of Merlin, the venerated prophet of that day. Old Roger gravely relates a circumstance which ought to have made a deep impression on the mind of the British king.

"King Vortigern was sitting by the bank of a pool, out of which two dragons came forth; one of them was white, the other red. As soon as they approached each other, they commenced a dreadful combat, breathing forth flames. The white dragon got the better of his antagonist and pursued him into the margin of the pool; when the red one, indignant at the repulse, turned on the white dragon and forced him to retire. While they were thus fighting, the king commanded Merlin Ambrosius to say what the battle meant. Whereupon, bursting into tears, and full of the spirit of prophecy, he thus began:—'Woe to the red dragon, for his banishment approaches! The white dragon, which signifies the Saxons, whom thou hast invited over, shall possess his caverns; whereas the red dragon signifies the British people, which shall be

[2] Roger of Wendover's Chronicles.

opposed by the white dragon. His mountains shall be brought low as the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall flow with blood; the isles of the ocean shall be subdued by his might, his praise shall be sounded among the nations[3].'"

But Rowena's words were more persuasive than the fiery breathings of the dragons. She had a winning way of blending the Saxon and the Celtic tongues, and her blue eye and sprightly wit had more power over the infatuated Vortigern than had the stern eye and wild rhapsodies of Merlin. Yet it could have needed no prophetic inspiration to foresee that awful calamities were impending; that two thunder-clouds were meeting—the anarchy wrought by civil discords and the misery brought on by hostile invasion.

Vortigern married Rowena; and thereby deeply offended his sons and his nobles. Hengist, his son-in-law, soon presumed on the relationship, and found opportunity to speak to him thus:—"Listen to my counsel. Let us invite over my son Octa with his brother Abissa, both warlike men, and give them the country in the north part of Britain, in the neighbourhood of the wall, between Deira and Scotland. They will there sustain the attacks of the barbarians, and thou wilt remain in peace on this side of the Humber.

Vortigern assented, and straightway on his invitation came Octa, Abissa, and Cerdicius, with

[3] Roger of Wendover.

300 vessels full of armed men; all of whom were graciously received by Vortigern and presented with rich gifts. The Britons, seeing this, and fearing their treachery, advised the king to expel them from his dominions, for pagans ought not to have intercourse with Christians. Besides, so great a multitude had come over, that they were a terror to the natives whom they ought to have protected. But Vortigern declined their counsel, because he loved the Saxons above all people, for his wife's sake. The exasperated Britons revolted, and deprived the king, whom they despised, of his dignity and authority, which they conferred on Vortimer, the eldest of his three sons. The deposed monarch seems to have spent the remainder of his life most ingloriously; contentedly yielding to the stronger will of his imperious son-in-law. He is said to have retired into Wales, where he thought himself secure within a strong tower; but Aurelius, one of the British kings, besieged the fortress furiously, having first addressed his followers thus:—"Think ye, my noble chiefs, that these walls can protect Vortigern, who has wasted the fertile land of his fathers, expelled the nobles, destroyed the churches, and almost blotted out the Christian religion from sea to sea? Now, my noble countrymen, quit yourselves like men, and inflict vengeance on the author of these evils, and then we will turn our arms against the Saxons." The strong building resisted until the assailants had recourse to fire, which, once kindled, burnt without intermission,

till both Vortigern and his tower were consumed.

This version of the romantic story of Rowena and the British king is one of Roger of Wendover's "Flowers of History," as he calls his chronicles. Roger was a monk of St. Alban's Abbey, who wrote in the reigns of King John and Henry III. He culled his "flowers" from manuscripts in the monasteries, till he came to his own times, and then he gathered them as he passed along, and plucked some of them from Runimede when the "bulwark of English liberty" was rising.

Returning to the Saxon conquest of Kent, we will very briefly pass over the records of bloodshed, devastation, and suffering which several old chroniclers have given in horrible detail. We are glad to remember that they are not as trustworthy as are the Roman historians who narrated the former conquest of Britain. Almost all we know about the wars of Hengist's time has come down into the broad stream of history by the Bruts and the Triads, and by the songs of the Bards[4]. The materials thus derived have been repeatedly investigated; and we are assured that the conflict was terrible and protracted, and that horrible cruelties were committed. There is some reason for believing that the cromlechs of that mysterious circle at Stonehenge saw a deed of ruthless massacre more bloody than any which they had seen in the

[4] The Bruts and Triads were ancient British records.

days of the Druids, when men in heathen darkness, striving to serve two masters, thus built a temple for the united worship of the Sun and the Serpent.

The Saxons came to Britain in different and unconnected bodies, at different periods, extending over a space of more than a hundred years. Besides those battle-fields which have received their fame on credible authority, there are local histories and traditions pointing to many spots where the Briton contended with the Sâxon, where both left their bones and their strong weapons, and where survivors may have raised the circular mound of earth, or reared the memorial stones.

We have authentic accounts of five battles fought in Kent. The first took place on the banks of the little river Derwent. The second at Eaglesford, now Aylesford, on the Medway, was a desperate struggle which lasted several days. Both armies fought long and fiercely, till the battle turned against the Saxons, who fled from the field. The Britons pursued them closely, slew an immense number, and dispersed the remainder; but Horsa rallied a band of men, and attacked a body of Britons commanded by Catigern, a brother of King Vortimer, whom he slew; whereupon Vortimer pursued Horsa and killed him with his own hand. Thus each party lost a brave captain on that day, and Hengist is said to have fled from the enemy, a thing which he had never done before (A.D. 455).

The country people naturally connect their dim

notions about that sanguinary battle with Kit's Cotty House, which is commonly said to be the tomb of Catigern. This supposition is not inconsistent with the historical account of the battle of Aylesford and the subsequent skirmish in which Catigern fell. But antiquaries tell us that the remarkable cromlech on Blue Bell Hill, known as Kit's Cotty House, is coeval with those of Stonehenge, which it exactly resembles. Two huge upright stones support a horizontal one. If it be indeed a druidical monument, it must have been seen by the Saxons as we now see it, and they may have pondered over it.

This cromlech is a very striking object; it stands at some distance from the road leading from Rochester to Maidstone, on an elevation overlooking the valley through which the Medway winds. It stands there, the solitary vestige of an age forgotten, surrounded by a lovely scene, which illustrates the beauty of Nature, the blessings of peace, and the wealth of cultivation as fully as the view from a hill-top can do.

A third battle took place either at Stonar, near Sandwich, or at Stone End, near Hythe: the similarity of these names has occasioned confusion; but in either case it was near the sea; which agrees with the account, that the Saxons, being repulsed, fled to their boats. An extraordinary number of human bones are still existing, crumbling away under the church at Hythe, where they are looked on with unavailing curiosity, as nothing

certain is known about them; but it is supposed that some great battle must have occurred in the neighbourhood, and probably it was that of Stone End.

Hengist gained his crowning victory at Crayford, A.D. 457, after which he assumed the title of King of Kent. But his supremacy was that of a military despot; and the country was in such an unsettled state, that many historians distinguish Hengist as the conqueror, and his son Eric as the founder of the kingdom.

The last battle was fought in the Isle of Thanet, very near the spot on which Hengist and Horsa had first landed. Twelve British chieftains were left dead on the field, which was thenceforth called Wypped's Floet, after Wypped, the only Saxon thane who fell. The Britons are described as fleeing from the Saxons as from fire, after that final conflict.

We have no reliable account of the latter years of Hengist's life: his death is supposed to have occurred about thirty years after that memorable day on which he and his brother, while cruising in the Channel, received Vortigern's invitation.

It should be borne in mind that Hengist, the Saxon hero of the East, flourished shortly before King Arthur, the British hero of the West. Exaggeration has been equally busy with both those names. Hengist is said to have carried terror and devastation to the remotest corners of the island; but Turner, who gives Anglo-Saxon history very clearly, considers that there is no good evidence

of his having penetrated, except in his first depredations, beyond the region which he transmitted to his posterity, viz. the present county of Kent, with Middlesex, and a part of Surrey.

Wonderful stories were told of both Hengist and King Arthur, and for centuries they were implicitly believed, for they were not more astonishing than the marvels and miracles commonly believed in through the dark ages. But when men became enlightened enough to see that these stories could not be all true, they fell into the opposite error, and doubts were put forward as to whether these famous heroes had ever lived, an extreme as objectionable as the exaggeration which caused it.

It has even been said that Hengist and Horsa were not the names of individuals, but merely designations derived from the standards borne by two valiant brothers. Certainly these words are still extant, as nouns of the Danish language, which signify horse and mare. The standards of the Saxon leaders bore these devices, and the snow-white prancing steed has ever since been the ensign of Kent.

The motto "Invicta" is of later date. It is said to have been accorded by William the Conqueror as an acknowledgment that the men of Kent were unconquered, that they submitted voluntarily, making their own conditions. That tradition is based upon the writings of a monk of Canterbury, named Thomas Spot; resting on no higher authority, its veracity has been questioned; but as Camden

says, "Who ever opposes it, will be obliged to find some other fair account how the men of Kent in particular come to retain that custom of gavelkind, in virtue of which both the men and the maids of Kent may claim some peculiar privileges."

Although time has almost obliterated these old distinctions, yet their having continued through successive ages, surviving many political changes, proves that the brave free spirit of that first band of our Teutonic ancestors which migrated from Jutland to Kent, was transmitted to their descendants.

The monk's story has been repeated in ancient books; and the old song, which refers to the achievement that fixed the proud word "Invicta" on the white-horse banner, is still popular in Kent. It often precedes the National Anthem at the conclusion of a harvest or hopping feast, and the Kentish Volunteers march to its cheerful tune.

"When Harold was invaded,
And, falling, lost his crown,
And Norman William waded
Through gore to pull him down;
When courtiers round, with fear profound,
To mend their sad condition,
Their land to save, base homage gave,
Then Kent made no submission.
Sing, sing in praise of men of Kent,
So loyal, brave, and free:
Of Britain's race, if one surpass,
A man of Kent is he."

CHAPTER III.

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT, AND CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

"A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, and gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth."

GOLDSMITH.

MOST historians invariably apply the term Heptarchy to the Saxon kingdoms established in Britain, although at one time they formed an octarchy, or federation of eight kingdoms, and at another time a hexarchy, or six kingdoms, when Deira and Bernicia were amalgamated into Northumbria. Over these separate States there was a paramount ruler: sometimes the king of one State, sometimes the king of another, was elected to the post of honour and authority. He was a sort of Emperor of England, and bore the title of Bretwalder, or wielder of Britain. The king who bore that proud title presided at the Witenagemot,

literally, the meeting of wise men. This national council assembled at stated periods; in early times the meetings were held in the open air, under the shelter of some venerable oak.

To understand the constitution of this assembly, it is necessary to distinguish the several classes of the Saxon population. As the Saxons conquered Britain, every warrior obtained a number of captives and a grant of land proportioned to the services he had rendered. The land was divided into small portions, called "hides," a hide being as much as one man could cultivate.

> "A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
> When every rood of ground maintain'd its man."

This simple conception of justice appears to have influenced our forefathers when they were dividing the land; yet, even then, a soldier who had distinguished himself had servants bestowed on him accordingly, and as many hides as that number of men could cultivate. And so it came to pass, that the Anglo-Saxons, like every other nation upon earth, divided into various classes.

The king, of course, stood alone, superior to all his subjects. The leaders of the several victorious bands which conquered the country, were naturally the fathers of the first races of kings.

Although we chiefly owe our English aristocracy to the Norman Conquest, yet the Saxons also had very aristocratic feelings. Almost all their royal families traced their descent back to Odin, and

every earl had sprung from some renowned ancestor. They were very careful and very proud of their genealogies, which are even now extant, and they show the spirit of the people as clearly as Magna Charta shows the spirit of those who gained it.

In the early Saxon times, no amount of wealth would enable a man of obscure origin to rank with one who could trace his origin back to some recognized founder of a family; and though military renown gave honour, land, and other kinds of wealth, it did not give the rank of Earl to a commander who did not possess it by birth.

The earl took precedence in the Witenagemot; his estate was called an ethel, and there he lived in patriarchal style, bearing nearly the same relation to his household as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did to theirs.

A nobleman was not allowed to marry a woman of inferior birth; those who did so incurred a very heavy penalty. Next to the earl, stood the Thane, who had risen above the multitude by military services, or by other means of acquiring property, which, as time went on, presented themselves to the aspiring and diligent.

The mass of the population were called ceorls, or villains. The distinction between this class and the superior was strongly marked in a manner very repugnant to our ideas of justice. The declaration, or word of an earl was worth that of six ceorls. The life of one earl was equal to the lives of six ceorls, and so on.

The ceorl was considered as belonging to the land which he was bound to cultivate; so long as he performed certain services or duty to his lord, he could not be removed from the estate.

From that point of view he appears somewhat like a tenant holding a lease for life, which might descend to his children; for he was in some respects a free man. On the other hand, he and his wife and children could be given, bequeathed, bought and sold, with the land. But either of these transactions widely differed from the transfer of a slave, whose person is the subject of the purchase. Moreover every ceorl had a right to purchase his own freedom and that of his family, at a price appointed by law. This proves that he had some power of acquiring money, and some legal protection by which it was secured to him, although his interests were not considered equally with those of his superiors.

The question, whether the ceorls were of British origin, has been much discussed; it seems to be generally thought that at least the greater number of them were the conquered Celts, with whom the Saxons of inferior birth mingled, and became connected by marriage and other circumstances. In subsequent ages, when the agitation of the Saxon invasion had completely subsided, this blending of the races became general, being no longer confined to any particular class; and to that amalgamation, under Providence, we owe

our national vigour—to the fact that we are not purely Celtic nor purely Teutonic—to a valuable compound produced by the fusion of the natural elements of character in the races; the genius of the Celt, with its vivid imagination, its warm enthusiasm, its quick perception of the perfect and the beautiful, its love of simile and all poetical conceptions; and the power of the Teuton, with its irresistible will, its stedfastness of purpose, its vigour of thought and action, and its untiring energy. In history, as in chemistry, the joining of two elements which are violently repellent, causing fumes and fierce effervescence when first they come together, may produce in the final result a most happy combination[1].

After the introduction of Christianity, it was decreed that "if a ceorl thrived so that he possessed five hides of land, a church or private chapel, a Burg-gate seat (which implied a magisterial position), and specified duty in the king's hall, he was thenceforth worthy of the dignity of Thane." And these freedmen or franklyns became a very numerous and important class—in which lay the vital strength of the body politic.

The Theowes, or Servi of Doomsday Book were complete slaves, their condition was similar to that of the ancient Roman, or the modern negro slave. A small proportion of these bondsmen were the offspring of British serfs who had exchanged

[1] Matthew Arnold.

masters, and who might not be worse off for the change: but by far the greater number were free-born Saxons who had forfeited their liberty by their crimes.

Capital punishment was very seldom inflicted by law, and only for what were considered the worst offences; but almost every crime had a penalty or fine attached to its commission, and if the culprit could not pay the fine, he forfeited his liberty. A relation or friend might redeem him, but the price of redemption must be paid within a year of the condemnation: after that, his doom was irrevocably fixed, and the children of criminal parents inherited their degradation.

But the treatment of these unfortunate members of the community seems to have been on the whole humane; and excepting, perhaps, actual criminals, all might hope to procure their liberty either by purchase, or as a free gift from their masters. When Christianity was established, the clergy did all in their power to alleviate the rigour of slavery; and though few masters in health and strength would be prevailed on to liberate their slaves, yet a dying master not unfrequently bequeathed freedom to one who had served him faithfully.

The Witenagemot comprised the king, earls, and thanes. It was the great national assembly, which debated and decided on all important matters; the legislative council, the germ from which sprang the Parliament of Great Britain. The Shyremoot, or lesser national assembly, was also

instituted before King Alfred divided England into shires: it existed in the time of the Heptarchy, for Ethelbert periodically assembled the Shyremoot on Penenden Heath, and his queen may have occasionally accompanied him, as in the seventh century Saxon ladies were allowed to be present at a Shyremoot.

We know but little of the laws enacted through the three first generations after the Saxon Conquest, as the earliest code extant is that of Ethelbert, the fourth from Hengist, who is said to have revised the laws which he found in existence. Yet even the revised code left the ceorls and slaves, amounting to nearly two millions of people, in such thraldom that they could be sold, chastised, and branded at their masters' will.

All ancient laws agree in giving great power to the head of a family: he was considered as naturally entitled to be the almost absolute ruler over his wife, children, apprentices, servants, and slaves. The first restrictions which were put on this domestic despotism are curious; for instance, three blows with a broomstick on any part of the body except the head, is declared to be a proper allowance; and a man might beat his wife with a stick as thick as his middle finger. The rod was thought to perform a very important part in education; so much so, that "my school days" were then commonly referred to by the expression "when I was under the rod," alluding to the most "striking incident" of the period.

Ethelbert's laws inflicted both corporal punishments and fines on almost every conceivable offence. We read of the scourge, the knotted whip, fetters for the hands and feet, and a shackle for the neck. The scold's bridle, which is still shown at Chester, seems to be of later date; but at that early period stocks were always placed at the entrance of every large town.

Some historians have assumed that the precision with which fines were fixed, proves that Saxon coins were struck at this early period; but Wright explains that the Anglo-Saxon word supposed to signify a shilling, meant only a certain amount of money, for they had no coins except as they used those left here by the Romans, and the rude British imitations called post-Roman coin, which continued in circulation through the pagan Saxon period[2].

Cattle, the first wealth of mankind, is in most countries the first money, as it now is with the Kafir tribes of South Africa, and with all uncivilized nations. In that primitive state of society, the worth of cattle is the standard by which all other commodities are valued: and in some parts of the world, the most ancient coins have the figures of cattle stamped upon them; because, when metal

[2] "He who struck off another man's ear, paid twelve shillings; he who put out an eye, fifty shillings; the thumb was valued at five shillings; and the shooting finger was worth more than the others, by which we may be sure that the Saxons used the bow, though archery was brought to perfection by the Normans."—*Pictorial History.*

money was first introduced, it was simply looked upon as a substitute for the cow, the ox, or the sheep.

The origin of wealth is indicated by our common word pecuniary, derived from *pecunia*, the Latin for money, which comes from *pecus*, cattle. In every age and country, commerce has continued to be carried on by barter long after the introduction of metal money; but trading by exchange of goods gradually gives way before the free circulation of current coin, which in time becomes the most convenient representative of every sort of property and commodity[3].

The Saxons, being a maritime, were naturally a commercial, people. Their crude ideas on the first principles of commerce are preserved in a very curious old MS. in the British Museum. It is a volume of Saxon dialogues. A merchant is introduced, who thus gives an account of his occupation and manner of life. "I say that I am useful to the King, and to Ealdermen, and to the rich, and to all people. I ascend my ship with merchandise, and sail over the sea, and sell my things, and buy dear things which are not produced in this land, and I bring them to you here, with great danger, over the sea. Sometimes I suffer shipwreck, with the loss of all my things, scarcely escaping myself." He is then asked, "What do you bring to us?" to which he

[3] Pictorial History.

answers, "Skins, silks, costly gems and gold, various garments, pigment, wine, oil, ivory and orichalcus (perhaps brass), copper, tin, and silver." "Will you sell your things here, as you bought them there?" "I will sell them dearer than I bought them, that I may get some profit to feed me, my wife, and children."

The manuscript which contains this, and other instructive dialogues, is supposed to have been used as a school-book for the young ones "under the rod." This conversational style was the most approved method of teaching. Probably the merchant traded chiefly at Marseilles, which was for centuries the great trading port of the western world. Few ships from our islands ventured beyond that port; for the art of ship-building advanced very gradually until king Alfred accomplished that improvement in it which was one of his great achievements[4].

England's first treaty of commerce was made with France. Offa, king of Mercia, then Bretwalda, and Charlemagne, were the parties who concluded that agreement, about five years before Egbert, king of Wessex, consolidated the heptarchy into one kingdom, to which the name of Angle-land, which had been commonly used long before, was formally given by a decree of the Witenagemot.

We know very little about the commercial world of that day, for the Anglo-Saxons did not exercise

[4] Pictorial History.

their ingenuity on ship-building, nor expend their energy in commercial undertakings, previously to the reign of Alfred, although their ancestors were pre-eminently seafaring men. But from the time when they settled down in Britain, until the era of Alfred the Great, they seem to have abandoned the sea to their kindred who remained in the northern lands, and to have occupied themselves almost entirely in organizing their institutions, and in bringing the land under cultivation. The strong arms, which had successfully wielded the sword and battle-axe, were raised to bring down the trees of the dense forests, which covered tracts of thirty or forty square miles in extent.

The Celtic Britons had scarcely ever enjoyed the blessings of peace since the Roman legions, which had protected them, had been recalled; consequently the land had been devastated by enemies, and neglected by its owners. When, however, the invaders had become the possessors of the soil, they applied themselves diligently to its improvement. The Britons were in a great measure their agricultural teachers, as well as their servants.

The bulk of the population was engaged in procuring food, and yet for hundreds of years the proportion of arable land throughout the country was very small; wood and meadow-land greatly preponderated. Pasturage was the most important department of rural economy, and the cow was the most valuable animal. Immense droves of swine were scattered over the waste

land, or driven into the forest, where they fed at nature's expense on acorns and wild roots. In those primitive times, the value of a tree was determined by the number of pigs that could be crowded together under its branches; this is but one instance out of many which show how questions were then dealt with, which are now solved by a scientific process.

We can picture the rural scenery, for ancient artists, whose drawings are amusingly curious, have illustrated the incidents of country life very minutely.

There is in the British Museum an interesting collection of manuscripts describing this period, which were gathered together by that distinguished antiquary, Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, who solaced himself with scientific researches through those trying times in which the Great Rebellion arose. One of the Cottonian manuscripts contains "The Saxon Calendar," a series of sketches representing the operations of husbandry during each month of the year. They show the dress of the working class, the hair so shortly cropped as to enlarge the appearance of the face; the short tunic confined by the waist-belt; and the long-pointed shoe. Those who direct the work may be distinguished by the sandals twisted from the ancle to the knee, and by their wearing more hair about the head and face: the privilege of cultivating the hair being only permitted to free men. From this pictorial calendar we learn that our agricultural

implements,—the plough, the sickle, the pitchfork, &c.,—have undergone no material change; they still retain their Saxon names [5].

The first sketch illustrates ploughing and sowing; the plough is drawn by four fine oxen. In the next, the husbandmen appear to be working in a vineyard; and we read that during the Saxon period vines were extensively cultivated in the south of England.

After the Norman Conquest the vineyards gradually decreased, until they became extinct; for England could grow corn and feed cattle to perfection, but her grapes were not equal to those of France; therefore, as her commerce flourished, her vineyards disappeared. "Each climate needs what other climes produce."

Ale seems to have been a favourite drink with the Saxon, as it had been with the Celt. Tacitus describes it as "barley corrupted to the likeness of wine;" and he remarks on its intoxicating effect. The Saxons, who improved the beverage, malted both wheat and barley; and the monks, who knew what was good, mixed them, and very probably added hops, as the early Anglo-Saxon vocabularies distinguish between the wild hop and the cultivated hop; and they also give the words *ciris*, cherry, and *ciris-beam*, cherry-tree; although Hasted, the historian of Kent, tells us that hops were first cultivated for use in 1552, and cherries

[5] Trench.

first planted near Sittingbourne, by a gardener of King Henry VIII.[6]

The sketch for May is a pretty pastoral scene. The master is overlooking his flock previous to the sheep-shearing—the sheep were then chiefly valued on account of the fleece. There was a good export trade for wool, as the Flemings came to our shores and carried away large quantities. They were the first European manufacturers of woollen goods, and for a long time supplied all the Continent.

The harvest scene is very lively: many figures are introduced; the masters or overseers are marked by their beards; a man looking on is blowing a cow's horn—cheering the labourers with music.

In July, the workmen are in the woods, wielding the strong axe, felling and trimming trees. The trees are ludicrously absurd; especially in one sketch which shows a swineherd beating acorns: the man is not badly drawn, draped with a loose flowing garment, but he is nearly as tall as the tree, an oak, on whose angular branches no leaves appear. Very large acorns indicate the nature of the employment, and a pig in the foreground puts an end to any doubt which might exist as to the subject of the picture. In August, the barley is being mown down with scythes.

In September, the harvest being ended, the men

[6] Bapchild, near Sittingbourne, was a noted place in very early times.

are driving swine to the woods and wastes; the herdsmen are armed with long spears, to protect the herds from robbers. In October, they are hawking. That sport began in August, through which month it was confined almost entirely to bringing down partridges; then came the season for quails; and from the end of September all sorts of birds were pursued, even magpies, blackbirds, and thrushes. Dogs were commonly used to rouse the game; but for finding waterfowl they were less efficient, as they lost the scent in the stream.

Hawking for waterfowl was the favourite sport with ladies, as it was the least fatiguing. There is a curious illustration in Wright's "Domestic Manners" of ladies hawking. One of the ladies is rousing the game by beating a tabor. Bows and arrows were used to bring down the birds which might have escaped from the hawk. All classes of persons enjoyed this diversion, the ceorls with the slaves under them pursued it for their masters' benefit, when their time was not better occupied, as we see by the sketch of October, where we may observe the thick gloves which were always worn to protect the hand from the talons of the hawk.

In November the husbandmen are sitting sociably round a blazing fire, mending their implements. In December they are threshing with flails, winnowing, and measuring, while the master marks the quantity on a notched stick.

A Cottonian manuscript contains many other

interesting illustrations of the Saxon period, besides the calendar. Several sketches represent men using the hammer; the workers on wood were called wrights, and the workers on iron, smiths. The iron-smith wrought every kind of implement from a ploughshare to a needle; and those who made weapons were as skilful in using as in forging them. We see the strong, muscular smith hammering on his anvil, while fierce flames play round it.

And now that we have glanced at these various classes of people, let us consider how they were held together by mutual intercourse, which must more or less exist in all communities. How were ideas and feelings communicated in those days, when matters of common interest could not be published and circulated as they now are, when few could read and write, when there were no postal arrangements, no newspapers, no periodicals?

There were then two binding communicative powers and conductors of sympathy—guilds and travellers; or rather, there was a characteristic feature peculiar to the age, which made guilds and travellers what they then were.

Even in the days of Tacitus, the guilds were softening and moulding the Teutonic character: that historian remarked on the self-devotion and friendly unity exhibited by the German guilds.

To understand the rise of these ancient societies, we must observe, that, when a nation begins to legislate, it first makes statutes, and subsequently

provides for their regular execution. It is far easier for the rulers of a rude courageous people to make laws, than to maintain them in constant force. Long after a man ceases to be the judge of his own cause, and to hold despotic power over all the members of his household, he continues to be his own policeman and sheriff's officer; for the king and national assembly can institute a tribunal, but the machinery for bringing offenders before it, and for carrying out its sentences, is so imperfect as to be almost useless. At that point in the progress of civilization, the guilds arose. They were primitive clubs—the first associations of which we read. In early days, the members met occasionally to ratify their engagement, to assist each other in recovering stolen property, to avenge each other's wrongs, to give mutual help in case of misfortune, and to bury in case of death.

These meetings were friendly and exhilarating, and the exploits which resulted from the unions were not unlike those of Robin Hood and his merry freebooters. But the merry men of the guild were not outlaws; on the contrary, they boasted that the laws could not be executed without their assistance. There were guilds of thanes, of merchants, of every sort of trade; and as time went on, they increased in number and importance. The rules differed, but all provided for conviviality, and for honourable interment in case of death [7].

[7] Thrupp's "Homes of the Saxons."

The free spirit with which hospitality was requested and accorded, also tended to promote sympathy, and to bind men together. Travellers performed a very important part, more important perhaps than they now do, although they are continually making geographical and other discoveries which increase the common stock of knowledge.

The traveller generally set out on his own errand, with his own objects in view; but he started with a happy feeling of readiness to knock at his neighbour's door, to solicit help by the way. Nobody thought of being either too high-minded or too modest to ask for food and lodging; the applicant felt sure of his welcome. He was courteously received by the head of the house, or, in his absence, by the person next in authority, who called servants to wash the stranger's feet, and to set refreshment before him.

The manners of that time were very much like those described by Moses in the first book of Holy Writ. In our climate, the kid killed on the arrival of an unexpected guest could not be so quickly prepared; but the stores of salted meat were very convenient on such an occasion, and also the sacks of dried beans which were boiled and eaten as we eat potatoes. Bread and cheese, and ale, and mead, seem to have been so abundantly produced as to be always ready.

When the stranger had been introduced to the family, he reported all the news he had gathered by the way, related his adventures, and described the

scenes he had looked upon. Probably he had seen more of the world than his entertainers had seen, and was earnestly listened to by those among them who thirsted for information, and could not draw it easily from books. The arrival of such a chance visitor might also afford an opportunity for sending a message or letter to some distant friend.

Nevertheless travellers had to contend with serious inconveniences and hardships. In those lawless times it was necessary for all freemen habitually to avail themselves of the privilege to bear arms even in time of peace; and the pedestrian always carried a staff with a nail at one end, to assist him in climbing over rugged hills.

Long journeys were made on foot, through wild districts where no gist-houses were to be met with. The gist-houses were reception houses, somewhat like the caravanserais of the East, which seem to have been established in various parts of Saxon England, near the high-roads. The ruins of Roman villas, and small military stations, were often roughly repaired and adapted to afford temporary shelter for travellers, who always took provisions with them. A shelter of this kind, consisting of bare walls, was called a cold-harbour; many spots in different parts of the country still retain that name, and they are generally on Roman sites, not far from Roman roads.

The wayfarer experienced great vicissitudes. One night he might be shivering in the cold-harbour, yet grateful for that shelter, preferring

it to sleeping in the forest or in the open air; the next night he might be revelling in the warm hall of some stranger lord, or sharing the home comforts of the labourer or the shepherd.

Merchant travellers seem to have congregated for companionship and mutual defence against robbers. They probably carried tents, and lighted gipsy fires, as itinerant dealers and pedlars have done in later times. Those vagrant traders still find their way to every fair, just as their prototype, the respectable wealthy merchant of the olden time, resorted to every wake in the country.

Very soon after the Saxon conquest, every town and village had its appointed place for public games. Wandering minstrels and gleemen swelled these meetings, and merchants found it profitable to exhibit their goods to the assembled multitude. The custom strengthened with time, till the people of a country town looked forward to their wake as the opportunity for learning the fashions, and for making their annual purchases.

In the earliest pagan times, these meeting-places were usually chosen near some object of popular superstition. But it can have mattered little whether such sentiment had previously attached itself to the spot: affectionate associations would be sure to cling to it, and to the landmark by which it was distinguished. Throughout England there are many places bearing names which seem to point back to those ancient popular gatherings, such as Wakefield and Folkestone.

We do not know exactly where stood the rock or stone round which the "folks" dwelling between Dover and Hythe assembled, but certainly it was a charming, invigorating spot, for all along those heights the sea-view is magnificent, and the air especially healthful. In very early times Folkestone was one of England's grandest towns, for it was fortified and embellished by Eadbald, the son of Ethelbert and Bertha, who is said to have made it his sea-side residence; and his daughter Euswithe, a celebrated abbess, lived and died there.

Our brief review of progress during the early Saxon period shows the Saxons as a people possessing wonderful power of rising with circumstances, and adapting themselves to the changes which they experienced. As sea-faring pirates, they fearlessly committed themselves to the ocean in their rude boats, and seemed to feel that it was their destiny "to rule the waves." Then we see them as warriors accomplishing the conquest of the country. We cannot justify their cruelty, but to judge them fairly we must compare their mode of warfare with that of their contemporaries. The Saxons were temperate and merciful compared with the Danes and other northern nations; and they do not lose our esteem when we pass on to make some acquaintance with the Franks. Then we see the Anglo-Saxons as settlers, establishing governments, acquiring all the peaceful arts, and bringing the long-neglected land under cultivation. Afterwards they turned their attention to mental culture,

and produced men famous in their generations; among whom the Venerable Bede and Alfred the Great stand pre-eminent.

Bede wrote his "Ecclesiastical History" in Latin: King Alfred translated it into the popular language, and he wrote "Collection of Chronicles," and other works. The Roman alphabetical letters were used by these early writers, for the Roman missionaries had discouraged the use of Runic characters, because they had been connected with pagan superstitions, and because they could not write books with them[8]. In heathen times there was a Rune for every kind of evil under the sun, a piece of wood in which certain Runic characters were cut, forming a word or a verse. These Runes were looked upon as charms, as safeguards against sickness or accident, and every sort of trouble.

There was a highly esteemed class of persons who got their living entirely by composing and cutting these Runes. The aged went to them for Runes to cure infirmities that were creeping on them; the youth procured a Rune to assist him in securing the object of his aspiration and hope; even a fickle heart could be steadied by a Rune; and the hard heart of a severe master or mistress could be softened, and a rebellious child could be brought to obedience by one of these magical

[8] There was no Christian feeling against the Runic letters; they were in use among the Christian monks down to the twelfth century, and are found in monkish manuscripts; but they were quite unsuitable for writing books.—*Wright.*

charms. Bitter must have been the disappointments of those who trusted in them, and yet the superstition continued to prevail, even after the introduction of Christianity. This is not surprising; very few of us begin our Christian course heartily willing to bear the trials of life, anxious only to use them wisely and to be patient under them, not looking for, nor expecting, any speedy deliverance from the over-ruling Providence in which we trust. The missionaries were perfectly right in doing their utmost to abolish Runes; and the Runic characters gradually fell into disuse after the Italian monks had introduced Roman letters, which they used for teaching the Anglo-Saxon natives, pursuing very much the same system as that on which they had been themselves instructed in their young days.

Very zealous and hard-working were those teachers. If we think of the life which monks, who were engaged chiefly in educational work, must have led, surrounded by large classes of ignorant and undisciplined pupils, we shall feel that they deserve our warmest praise for their devotion to a good cause, although we may smile as we read the following description of the improved method of education introduced about the middle of the seventh century by Archbishop Theodore, the greatest scholar of his age. "When books were scarce, oral instruction, or instruction through the medium of lectures, was a necessity; the scholars took notes as they listened to a lecture, and then committed those notes to

memory. Only advanced pupils could have profited by that mode of teaching; for such it was excellent.

"A great deal of the instruction given in a school was catechetical; of the mode in which these examinations were conducted we have some examples; here, for instance, is a lesson in arithmetic.—A swallow once invited a snail to dinner; he lived just one league from his friend's abode, and the snail travelled at the rate of only one inch in an hour; how long was it before he dined[9]?"

The earliest maps preserved are of the tenth century. They are now amusing curiosities, for the geographical mistakes are most absurd. And as to astronomy and other branches of science, our Anglo-Saxon forefathers shared the ignorance which prevailed throughout Europe until scientific light dawned in the mind of the illustrious Bacon. They were taught that the firmament is perpetually turning round the earth, which is so fixed that it always maintains a central position. It resembles a pine-nut, and the sun glides round it, and on the end where the sun shines it is day, while at the end left in darkness it is night. There is a certain city, named Jaica, where the sun sets; and another where it rises, called Jainta. Though composed of burning stone, the sun comes up out of the sea, and sinks into it again when it has run its daily course. When it is night with us, the sun is shin-

[9] Lives of the Archbishops.

ing on the islands of Glith, where the souls of holy men remain until doomsday.

Dr. Hook tells us, that we are not to feel surprised when we find our Anglo-Saxon ancestors not wiser on these points than the philosophers who preceded them, and those who for many generations followed. All that could be done in the schools of Theodorus was to make the pupils acquainted with the opinions and conjectures of their contemporaries [1].

This Archbishop of Canterbury introduced the study of the Greek language into England. He, in his young days, had acquired it in the schools of the same city in which St. Paul had learned it as a boy, for Theodorus was also a native of "Tarsus, a city of Cilicia;" he became distinguished for his learning both secular and sacred, was a good man, and a faithful chief pastor [2]. Latin, having been the popular language of the Roman period, was probably spoken in the towns, more or less, for generations after the coming of the Saxons; and those ignorant pagans were certainly instructed in the Latin tongue as soon as they were brought into the Christian Church, through the ministration and teaching of Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury.

This Augustine must not be confounded with another of the same name—Augustine, Bishop of

[1] Theodorus occupied the see of Canterbury from 668 to 690.

[2] Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

Hippo, a city on the coast of Algiers,—who is known by his writings, and as one of the examples which show us that the young may depart from evil ways, that repentance may be sincere, and its effects permanent. And the example of his mother Monica is most encouraging to all who earnestly pray on behalf of rebellious children.

Augustine of Hippo died about a hundred years before Augustine, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOMES OF THE SAXONS.

"The free, fair homes of England!
Long, long in hut and hall,
May hearts of native proof be reared,
To guard each hallowed wall!
And green for ever be the groves,
And bright the flowery sod,
When first the child's glad spirit loves
Its country and its God."

MRS. HEMANS.

WE have only one perfect record of the domestic manners of the Saxons before they settled in Britain; that is, a poem called the "Romance of Beowulf," a genuine narrative of the earliest date. The story is taken up, more with imaginary combats with monsters, than with domestic scenes; but it contains a few incidents in private life, which our most esteemed antiquaries consider valuable in the absence of historical record. In this poem we discover the origin of some of those wonderful stories which still rivet the attention of the little people in our nurseries.

Hrothgar, a mighty chieftain, caused a great

Mead Hall to be built at his palace. The hall gate rose aloft, curved, and with pinnacles, and was made fast with iron bands, forged cunningly. The roof of the hall was lofty and curved, variegated with gold, as were also the wooden walls. The floor, too, was variegated, and must have been raised, as steps are mentioned. The walls were partially hung with tapestry, and Hrothgar had a dais or throne, while benches were provided for the other members of his household. Not only at this early period, but also long afterwards, the table was literally the board—one large board or more, which rested on trestles, and could be removed when a meal was finished.

Beowulf, the hero of the tale, arrives at Hrothgar's house with a small band of followers: they are hospitably received as travellers, and invited to sit at the board. Before taking their places, they divest themselves of their armour—the helmet, the ringed mail-shirt, the round shield, and the spear; all of which are laid near at hand, in case of surprise, while the warriors sit down to refresh themselves, and to listen to the "wood of joy" (the harp) and the voice of the minstrel, who sings of valiant deeds. The song being done, they tell stories, each in his turn, till Wealtheow, Hrothgar's wife, enters, and greets the men in the hall. She serves the mead, offering it first to her husband, and then to the guests; and, seating herself by Hrothgar, the festivities continue until the time for retiring to rest. Beds, which are merely sacks

filled with straw, and bolsters, having been brought in for the travellers and placed on the broad benches, they all lie down to sleep, first taking care to be prepared against a midnight assault. The weapons and other portions of their armour are again particularly described as placed above the head of each sleeper.

A dreadful monster, named Grendel, who had long been the scourge of the neighbourhood, comes that night and, after a long struggle, receives his death-wound from Beowulf. Hrothgar and his household know nothing of this adventure until the morning, because all the bowers, or chambers, are detached from the grand hall. When the chief and his people see the signs of the conflict, and hear what has occurred, they highly commend Beowulf and his men, who set off to complete their exploit by searching for Grendel's mother, and his other monstrous relations—the dragons and giants of pagan poetry. Of course, the heroes destroy the enemy, and they leave Hrothgar's house, laden with the richest presents.

In this poem we are told of the arms the Saxons used, of the dresses in which they were clad, of the rings, bracelets, and other ornaments they prized; the valuable drinking-cups from which they quaffed the mead, the vases from which they poured it, the solid cup, and the various treasures carefully secured in that great hall, which is repeatedly called the treasure-hall. We can form no notion, however, of the shape or pattern of these things

from the poem itself. It is from the graves of the dead that we have obtained a perfect knowledge of the character and designs of all these various articles. But the grave is silent—it cannot tell us how they were used; and we should be at a loss to know, had not the story of Beowulf been preserved, and fragments of other old heroic poems which stirred the souls of those long-departed ones, whose bones and treasures are now exhumed from the Saxon barrows.

As time went on, the Saxons improved their residences, although the original design and character were retained. The grand hall, which occupied a central position, was always the important building, surrounded by smaller detached ones. The whole group of scattered erections, with the intervening land, all the homestead, was enclosed by a rampart of earth. Many of the earth-works, which are now supposed to have been ancient camps, are nothing more than the remains of these embankments, which have supported the soil that has accumulated over the ruins of Saxon homes and their surrounding grounds. In later times, stone was used both for the buildings and the outer wall; the halls became larger, more decorated and more commodiously furnished; and the household offices, and private apartments, or bowers, as they were termed, increased in number: so that a rich man's residence formed quite a village, and a few of them planted near to each other formed a town.

Several illustrations of Saxon residences may be seen in manuscripts preserved in the British Museum. The style of architecture is not unlike that of the Chinese. One of these sketches evidently represents the dwelling of a Christianized Saxon nobleman; for to the right of the hall is a domestic chapel, in which a hanging lamp is seen, and, attached to the chapel, is a little room, supposed to be the abode of the chaplain. Figures are introduced in the sketch; the lord and his lady stand in the wide archway which admits to the hall: they are distributing bread to a number of beggars, miserable looking creatures, scantily clad, who are allowed to approach, while servants are bringing clothes from one of the bowers to cover them. On one side of the court we see armed warriors, with their round shields and long lances. In the foreground, women are busily occupied round large, elegantly-shaped basins or vases. We cannot tell what they are doing, but two persons seem to be measuring corn, pouring it from a bucket or basket into one of the long narrow-necked sacks of the period. In this picture it is evidently the intention to represent the lower part of the walls as of brick or stone, and the upper part as of timber. The round, open arches, supported by pillars, give such a summer-house look to the buildings, that we wonder how they could have been habitable during the winter months; but our ancestors were no doubt inured to cold, and the urtains, with which the archways are elegantly

draped, might be thick enough to afford protection from wind and rain, when let down for that purpose, or when the rooms were closed for the night. The bowers were furnished with narrow doors, which must have been very insecure, if we may trust the following story.

A Northumbrian nobleman had a cage of wild beasts in his enclosure. One day, a bear broke loose, and made for the chamber of the lady of the house, in which she and her women had taken refuge. We gather from the context that this asylum would not have availed them, had not Hereward, a bold young visitor, slain the bear before it could reach them. It is evident that the lady's bower was then at some distance from the other buildings, and had a very weak door, which could not be secured by bolt or bar.

The Saxon notion of a window was a very contracted one, for they called it an *eag thyrl*, or eye-hole. Windows were unnecessary in the principal rooms, which obtained abundance of light and air through the open archways and porticoes. The earliest church windows of which we read were square holes, into which a very simple frame, covered with linen, and having one transverse bar, was fitted. Probably these windows were also adopted in domestic architecture. The roofs were generally thatched (the word thatch is unmistakably Saxon), or they were covered with tiles copied from the Roman roof tiles. The country houses were well placed; high ground was com-

monly preferred, as the elevation gave security, and also enabled the possessor to overlook all his estate. The collective house had various names: it was called the hûs or house, a general term for all dwellings, great or small; it was called a hall, in reference to its principal building; a ham, in reference to its being the home of the owner; and tûn, or ton, in reference to its enclosure. As the names of towns or villages occur to us containing one or other of these syllables, we are led to imagine how their existence began in days of yore.

The outer court, between the outer wall and outer circle of buildings, was called the geard, or yard; and the large door, or gate, which admitted to it, is often described by the earliest writers as strongly secured with iron bands or bars.

Passing from the home to its inhabitants, we picture to ourselves the tall, powerful, blue-eyed men, with their light brown hair, and their fair complexions tanned by exposure to wind and weather. In the fourth century, before the Saxons came to Britain, they all cut their hair short, but in succeeding ages that custom was followed by the lower class alone. An abundance of hair was considered the great mark of distinction, and the fashion was at one time very much exaggerated. The hair was parted down the middle, and long beards were worn, sometimes cut like a fork. A plain tunic, fitting the throat and reaching to the knees, was fastened round the waist by a

band or a girdle of folded cloth, the same colour as the tunic. Full blue and green were the prevailing colours of the tunics worn by earls and thanes; blue appears to have been the favourite colour. The peasantry wore different shades of brown. There were slight variations in the cut of the tunics; some being plain, others slashed and vandyked, and some ornamented with a bordering of embroidery worked by the nimble fingers of mothers, sisters, wives, or daughters. Over the tunic a short cloak was generally worn, fastened by a brooch on the right shoulder, or by one fixed at the centre of the breast, so that the cloak or mantle hung over the arms; while some were long enough to fall below the knees. The shoes are almost invariably painted black, with long pointed toes, and loosely covering the ancle; broad sandals, a kind of twisted bandage, reached from the foot to the knee, where they were secured by an ornamental fastening, a tie with tassels, or a brooch. Dress shoes were embroidered by the ladies, who sometimes ornamented them with precious stones.

The ladies appear to have rivalled their lords in the simplicity of their costume. A long gown fell in folds over the feet, and a super-tunic reaching to the knee was frequently worn over that. It seems to have been confined at the waist, and to have had a wide sleeve reaching midway from the elbow to the wrist. A very wide mantle covered the upper part of the body, and this, with the close

hoœl, formed a characteristic feature of the dress. Females of all ranks were seldom seen without the hood, and even royal ladies wore it under their crowns. Their dresses are represented in various colours—blue, red, green, pink, violet, and a few perfectly white. At the lady's girdle was suspended a bunch of useful implements; a knife, a pair of scissors, perhaps several large, rudely-formed keys, and various small articles, the purposes of which cannot now be ascertained.

The costume of the king differed in no way from that of the nobleman, except in the addition of the regal diadem, and in the colour of the tunic, which was purple. The dress of the queen was like that of the noble ladies of the land; and from what we can gather, crowns seem to have been worn by royal and noble personages on every important or festive occasion. We have the sketch of a queen in the Harleian MS., where the colours of the dress are indicated by inks of different tints. The long gown is drawn in red; and a capacious blue mantle, gracefully disposed, gives a dignified appearance. This rich dress is without ornament. But Saxon ladies valued—and often adorned themselves with—bracelets, rings, and other ornaments which are now found in the barrows, with the spear-heads and other relics of the arms habitually worn by their male relations, and usually buried with them [1].

[1] Fairholt's "Costumes."

Every free man carried arms, even in the most peaceful times. It was the badge of honour: to disarm a man was the greatest insult which could be offered to him.

Children wore the simple tunic with the broad belt; the little girl's dress was longer than the boy's. The hair of every free-born child was allowed to grow in natural luxuriance, falling wildly over the shoulders. It was neither shortened nor dressed until the youth came of age, or until the girl married, or was admitted into a convent, with a view to her leading a religious life[2]. When a youth came of age, which, as we have seen, was at twelve years old, one of the ceremonial observances of the eventful day was clipping and dressing his hair after the fashion of the times, which was done for the first time by his father's own hands. A young girl was said to be "in her hair," much as we speak of a girl in her teens. On the day of her marriage, her hair was first gathered up and bound round her head. Flowing hair was the sign of liberty and innocence, and cutting the hair quite close to the head was the greatest disgrace that could be inflicted.

Very happy as well as very jovial scenes animated the large lofty Saxon hall, and mirthful sounds often rang through it. It was there that the household gathered round their lord and his

[2] When the young woman took a monastic vow, her hair was cut short.

family: it was the scene of hospitality, and all sorts of in-door entertainments; a public apartment, never closed against any stranger who seemed worthy to be admitted. The inner walls were hung with wall-riff, literally, wall-clothing. This was sometimes of plain cloth, but might be ornamental. In the houses of wealthy earls and thanes, rich and precious tapestries were reserved to be hung up on extraordinary occasions, while less costly and attractive hangings served for daily use. As the ladies became educated, and acquired some knowledge of history, they grew fond of working historical subjects. A lady and her maidens would persevere until they had accomplished some elaborate work of years, which illustrated a portion of history. In the early times, incidents from sacred history were most frequently represented. The whole story of King David's life appears to have been a favourite subject. The walls of the hall were also furnished with rows of pegs or hooks, on which various articles were hung for convenience; the different portions of bright armour, shields, lances and swords, and also many things more useful than ornamental. Bede mentions a goose being taken down from the wall to be boiled. The furniture consisted chiefly of long seats, and in grand houses these were covered with carpets and cushions. Sometimes these coverings were very valuable, either for the richness of the material, or perhaps for affection's sake, if they had been woven or embroidered by friends. They are

often mentioned in very ancient wills, by which they are bequeathed, as well as vases, drinking-cups, personal ornaments, and other precious possessions. Fresh rushes were strewed every day over many of the earthen or stone floors, which gave, they thought, an air of comfort to the rooms.

The hall of the earl or thane always contained a variety of strong treasure-chests, in which his money and all his different valuables were stored; but he seldom accumulated much wealth in coins. Old poems speak of the hall as adorned with treasures, from which we may suppose that it was customary at times to set out the most precious and ornamental of the household vessels; most of these were elegantly formed in copper, gold, silver, earthenware, or glass, or in cow's horn mounted and finished with silver. Wealth soon became as unequally distributed among the Saxon lords, as among the aristocracy of the present day and the property was either used, displayed, or hoarded, according to the taste or disposition of the owner.

There were no fire-places or chimneys, in our acceptation of those words. The fire was made on the floor in the middle of the hall, in a hollow basin, guarded with stone; and the smoke escaped through an opening in the roof above, but must sometimes have struck down, veiling the scene lighted up by the crackling logs. When the shades of evening deepened, and all were resting from the labours and fatiguing sports of the day, the flicker-

ing blaze shone fitfully upon the living figures round the fire, and upon the grim needle-worked faces on the hangings, flashing on the armour and weapons, and across the many-coloured pattern of the floor. Then a complete circle gathered round the *heorth*, or hearth: the tired hunter, the grave yet active matron, young men, maidens and playful children, formed literally "the home circle." And the hearth had all those aids which our has to keep it bright and warm. Tongs, bellows, and fire-shovel, are words of Saxon origin, and we find these things in the earliest illustrations, and also huge logs and faggots to feed the flames, and torches, candles, and lamps[3]. Those were lively groups, for that was the time when the day's adventures were related, and startling reports were sometimes given; as the young men did not like to be quite out-done by their ancestors, whose exploits had come down to them in songs and traditions, embellished and magnified by unlimited poetical licence. There was no lack of merriment; for we are told that various games, practical jokes, tricks, and enigmas, afforded amusement for the leisure hour of that age. Children were taught to propound and answer riddles; it was considered an important part of their education, as tending to sharpen their wit. Every sort of play upon words

[3] A poetical name for the sun was "the candle of the firmament," which indicates the brilliancy of the candle, rather than that of the poetical genius.

was a fashionable accomplishment in which intelligent persons of mature age were ambitious to excel.

Tennyson thus happily describes this custom:—

"And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told
Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,
And made it of two colours; for his talk,
When wine and free companions kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the prince
To laughter, and his comrades to applause."

Idylls of the King.

The Saxons took three meals in the day—breakfast, before the duties of the day began; dinner, about noon or earlier; and supper in the evening. Through the morning hours, while the men of all ranks were engaged in out-of-door pursuits, the women occupied themselves in the domestic apartments. When we read the history of those early times, we should bear in mind that the same idea of privacy was not connected with the sleeping-room as at the present day. The chamber, or bower, was used both as sitting-room and bedroom. The beds sometimes stood quite out of the way, occupying recesses which were called bed-coves; these were somewhat like the berths in a ship's cabin, and were hidden by curtains. Our word *bedstead* may remind us of this primitive custom, as its literal meaning is, the place for a bed. *Chair* is a Norman word; the Saxons used

only the bench and the *stol*, preserved in our modern word *stool*. The heads of families sat on high seats, when they presided at the board, or gathered their household and guests around them. Luxurious seats were not likely to be invented by a people whose habits were not at all indolent. History now and then gives us a glimpse into the internal economy of the Anglo-Saxon home. Enough is told to show us that the Saxon woman, in every class of society, possessed those characteristics which are justly considered the best traits in the character of Englishwomen. She was the attentive house-wife, the virtuous and noble matron, the tender companion and comforter of her husband and children. Home was her especial place; she was taught that "It beseems a damsel to be at her board; a rambling woman scatters words, she is often charged with faults; a man thinks of her with contempt[1]." So says a curious poem in the Exeter Book, the only miscellaneous collection of the poetry of the Saxon period which has been preserved. *Lady* is an Anglo-Saxon word, which signified "bread-giver." It seems to indicate that active charity, hospitality, and courtesy were considered to be woman's highest duties. Gentlewomen used to distribute food, and serve their guests at table. Even the queen did not think it beneath her to hold the wine-cup to her husband and his guests. Courtesies of this kind

[1] Wright's "Domestic Manners of the Anglo-Saxons."

were never considered degrading, and were performed with a simplicity peculiarly characteristic of the age[5]. The king might be equally condescending, if we may judge from fragments of an old ballad which describes the manners of a very early age. It relates how a maiden, having been rudely treated by a member of the royal household, determined on appealing for redress to the highest authority. She straightway hastened to the outer gate of the wall which enclosed the king's house:

> "And there she pullèd at the ring,
> And who so ready as the king himself
> To let that fayre mayde in?"

This old story was sung only three generations ago, in one of those antiquated farm-houses, half hidden by their cherry-orchards, which still add to the picturesque beauty of Kent's rural scenery. There the mistress used to sit in the large fore-room, surrounded by her maids, with their hand-looms and spinning-wheels. Occasionally they enlivened themselves with a song; uniting their voices in the chorus, and thus progressing cheerfully through the long afternoons, and through the fabrication of home-made sheets and table-cloths, the strong heir-looms of the family. So long did simple good old customs linger in the comfortable homes of the Kentish yeomen. In the Saxon period, ladies of the highest rank sat

[5] Wright's "Domestic Manners of the Anglo-Saxons."

thus in their bowers, working with their female attendants.

The nurse of the family was always very much respected and considered. One nurse usually brought up all the children; and she was retained and treated with affectionate regard when her services were no longer required. In the ancient pagan times, one of the nurse's first duties was a curious one. She dug a hole in the earth, a sort of tunnel with an opening at each end, which was partly closed with bushes and long grass. The new-born babe was forced through this passage; great care being taken that there should be no room for invisible evil spirits to accompany it on this, its first journey. This was done as a charm; and they believed that the evil spirits, being baffled at the outset of the child's career, could have no power over it throughout its course. Infants sometimes suffered seriously from this practice; so, after a time, the nurse was allowed to go through the earth as the child's substitute, and the tunnel was made big enough for her to creep through. When Christianity had been introduced, this custom was reprobated as a remnant of heathenism, but it was a long time in dying out, for several Archbishops of Canterbury found it necessary to preach, and even to legislate, against it.

Children brought up by those nurses could scarcely in after life have realized the utter nothingness of the fabulous beings in whom their forefathers

had trusted. Those terrible or poetical creations of the fancy must still have seemed to be hovering round with malicious purpose, or in friendly good will; and many a Christian of vivid imagination must have wondered to his dying day, how far it was possible for some of the old stories to be true.

An infant was wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and slept in a cot of wood or wicker-work under the soft warm fur of some animal which its father had killed in the chase, or, in the case of a high-born babe, under a splendid quilt, embroidered by its mother and her attendants. Boys and girls were not the only pets which enlivened the home: dogs and hawks were looked upon as members of the family. There was generally a long perch in the lady's bower for favourite hawks, on which they were placed at night, and by day, when other occupations made it inconvenient for them to sit on the hand[6]. Ladies sometimes accompanied the gentlemen when they went out hawking; but they frequently enjoyed the sport alone, or with only the assistance of the falconers. As time went on, the passion for this amusement increased. There is a very ancient treatise on the subject, addressed especially to ladies, which gives the following directions. "It is advisable to hold the hawk on the wrist as continually as possible, and to carry it into public

[6] The Normans introduced the jesse, a strap of leather or silk passed between the fingers of the master or mistress, and fitted to the legs of the bird, to which a small bell was attached.

assemblies, and sometimes to perch it in the street, that it may see people, horses, carts, and dogs, and become acquainted with all things. And sometimes in the house let it be perched on the dogs, that the dogs may see it, and it them."

But although hawks were so liberally educated, and allowed to see the world, they were hoodwinked when taken out on duty. A hood was put over the bird's head so that it could see nothing until it had been brought into the field, and the game had been found by the dogs. Then the bird's eyes were uncovered, and it instantly darted after the prey.

The building used generally as a kitchen was too small for grand occasions, therefore the preparations for a large feast were carried on out of doors. Several fires were lighted, and over each a tripod was fixed, which held up a cytel or panna. Enormous boiling pots are now existing in antiquarian museums, bearing witness to the liberality of our forefathers; and a bullock or a sheep was roasted whole when a large party was to be entertained.

The hall table was, as we have seen, scarcely a piece of furniture. Tatwine, an Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury, a great scholar of his day, who wrote at the beginning of the eighth century, composed a number of riddles, in one of which a table, speaking in its own person, says that it is in the habit of feeding people with all sorts of viands,—that while so doing it is a quadruped, and is adorned with handsome clothing; but afterwards

it is robbed of all it possesses, and even loses its legs. All tables might have thus complained, for even those in the ladies' bowers were mere boards; which disappeared when not required.

Very large handsome table-cloths were used; their ample folds appear to have served the purpose of dinner napkins, though at each person's seat a towel was laid, and a bowl of water was handed round, that all might wash their hands both before and after eating. This was quite necessary, as forks were totally unknown, and it does not appear that every one was furnished with a knife. Bowls and large dishes were made of brass or copper, often very thickly gilt and elegantly formed. The bucket was a wooden vessel, often bound with delicately formed bronze hoops and handles, and was used to hold mead[7]. The Saxons had the good taste to admire and copy the Roman pottery: their vases, pitchers, basins, and jugs, were beautifully formed, and many of them delicately embossed. The drinking-glasses had no base, so that they could not stand upright, and must, therefore, be emptied at a single draught. Hence the origin of the word tumbler, though it was applied to glasses of a totally different shape.

In the early illustrated manuscripts, dinner scenes are frequently represented. The table is always well provided, and many persons sit round

[7] There were large Roman potteries in the marshes near Upchurch.

it; which may be accounted for by the fact, that the earls and thanes kept perpetual open house. Acquaintances and even strangers might at any time arrive unexpectedly. The guests were admitted through the outer gate, and were required to leave their arms in the care of a porter; and then, whether known or not, they were courteously welcomed by the nobleman, or, in his absence, by his steward. The sketches show that ladies and gentlemen sat together, sometimes alternately, sometimes without any special arrangement, and that the board was well covered with dishes, most of which resemble in shape those of our dessert services—they evidently contain bread, fish, rolls, vegetables, and fruit. A few ladles, spoons, and knives, appear, but these are very clumsily formed: the knives are like our razors, or roughly-made bread-knives. There is nothing like a plate, and the roast meat is being served in very primitive style. The servants who carry it round the table are on their knees, presenting it to the guests at the point of the spit. It seems that each person took the knife in turn to cut off a slice. The substantial repast being finished, the drinking proceeded vigorously. When the ale or wine was first served, those who took the cup pledged each other with certain conventional phrases, wishing health and happiness, before they raised it to their lips.

In the home of the Saxon nobleman, the family glee-man was expected on every important occasion to entertain the company. It was his duty to be

acquainted with all the traditions of the house, and to know every fact or fable that could be recounted in song, to exalt the dignity or flatter the pride of his lord. His was, as Hrothgar's glee-man termed it, "the right of bestowing praise," which he wisely valued, for that power always gives extensive influence to those who know how to use it. Of course, these family laureates exalted their own lord by depreciating others; and they could abuse a foe as admirably as they could flatter a friend. The king's glee-man was usually an accomplished poet, and always held the rank of Thane.

In all the sketches which represent large dinner-parties, a band of musicians is introduced, consisting of a trumpeter, a harper, a piper, a fiddler, and a horn-blower. We are told that every wealthy proprietor of an estate accommodated and maintained a band of musicians and a glee-man, who attended daily in the hall. In the less elevated class, where professed minstrels were not retained, the harp or lute was handed round; and every person who could play and sing was expected to do so. All well-born Saxons were carefully instructed in music and singing,—as proficiency in these accomplishments was the distinguishing mark of good position in society. A man of low degree was not allowed to possess a harp, lest he should pretend to be a gentleman. The instruments were made so light and small, that, when resting on the knee, they did not conceal the face of the performer, who was singing verses of his own

composition, or a song he had learned from a friend or fellow-traveller, or some long traditional ballad,—for at these convivial meetings they sang their national poetry.

The members of a landowner's household belonged to the privileged class, although they performed duties which we think menial, and some of them could neither read nor write. The Northern Angles had more wild poetic feeling than the Saxons of the South, and at their jovial meetings amused themselves with singing or chanting stories in an alliteral kind of verse, easily composed. Bede tells us of a young man who was so much less instructed than his equals, that he had never even learnt any poetry, and was unable to sing to the harp. On one occasion, stung with mortification, he left the table, and went to watch the cattle, it being his turn to keep guard over them. Lying down in the stable beside the animals, he fell asleep, and in his dream he saw a stranger who saluted him by name, desiring him to sing something. The sleeper replied, "I cannot sing, and therefore I have left the feast." "Nay," said the voice, "but thou hast something to sing." "What shall I sing?" "Sing the origin of all things," was the reply; and thereupon he began to sing in his sleep verses which he had never heard before; and when he awoke, he had fast in his mind all that he had sung in his sleep, and he added other verses in the same measure.

In the morning, the newly inspired poet hastened

to the town-reeve of Whitby, who, being astonished at the miracle, took him to the abbey, which was a double monastery, and there he related his dream, and recited his verses to the Abbess Hilda and to many learned men, who were all of opinion that he had received the gift of song from Heaven. Then Hilda advised him to leave the world and to live in her house, to which he agreed; and there the monks explained to him the sacred stories of Holy Scripture, which he turned into Saxon verse. The style of the composition is unequal, but some passages are favourable specimens of the earliest English poetry; and some of the ideas are sublime as those of Milton.

Besides the singers and musicians who lived under the patronage of monks and nobles, there were numerous bands of wandering glee-men who went about to every sort of festive assembly,—to the king's palace or to the village wake. They added juggling, tumbling, and other similar feats to their musical performances; therefore they were always welcome at a merry-making [8].

The dancing of those days was very energetic, and is ludicrously represented by the Saxon artists. A wedding-feast lasted for at least three days, and was conducted with great profusion. We have already glanced at the customs connected with a pagan marriage. The introduction of Christianity gave solemnity to the event, and elevated and

[8] Wright.

refined the popular sentiments which arose on these occasions. We have seen that the disposal of the hair marked the difference between the maiden and the wife. From the earliest days of the Christian Church, the bridal dress was white; and the most ancient bridal wreath was composed of myrtle or olive leaves, intermixed with white and purple flowers, and fastened together with white silk. The white was symbolical of virgin purity, the purple, of the blood of our Lord. On the wedding-day the father gave a parting present to his daughter; it might be some trifling token of affection, it might be a large estate or a well-filled treasure-chest. On the morning after the wedding, the bridegroom presented his gift, according to his position and circumstances[9]. We are told that the English lady of the present day has scarcely a privilege which her progenitrix did not enjoy at the close of the Anglo-Saxon period. She could inherit, hold, and bequeath landed property, and was allowed to partake of all social pleasures. By that time, no woman could be compelled to marry without her own consent, although she was required to give a reason if she opposed the wishes of her father; and that reason must be satisfactory to the executors of the civil and ecclesiastical laws. Widows were under special legal protection; and, although the terms of the matrimonial contract still wore so mercenary an aspect that "buying a wife" was the

[9] Thrupp.

legal expression,—as we find in the code of Ethelbert, the most ancient English code extant,—yet the comfort and protection of the female seem to have been the leading considerations in a marriage settlement. At the end of the seventh century, married women held so high a position that they might appear at the Witenagemot and Shire-moots, and might institute suits at law. But the home is woman's kingdom; and on her rights, character, and conduct, its happiness or misery, rudeness or civilization, must chiefly depend[1].

We have marked how, in our own country, woman rose up, from a state but little above that of slavery, to her divinely-appointed position—as the help-meet for man. We observe, that at an early period of our history, this upward progress was surprisingly rapid. Let us gratefully remember that the turning-point was the long and prosperous reign of Ethelbert, who ruled his kingdom with an earnest desire to promote its welfare; and who, being himself ruled by the gentle influence of Queen Bertha,—as we shall presently see,—readily obeyed the call which he received in the prime of life, to enter the kingdom of Christ's Church, to labour diligently for the glory of God and the spiritual advancement of himself and his people.

[1] "Homes of the Saxons."

CHAPTER V.

BERTHA'S NATIVE COUNTRY.

"Some there are
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle."

WORDSWORTH.

WHILE the Saxons were forming their kingdoms in England, other northern nations were settling themselves in Germany and Gaul. Every where the miry clay was mixing with the iron, although, as Daniel had predicted, they did not cleave together; and "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands" was there[1].

We have seen that the fourth, or Roman Empire, was destroyed by three great nations, whose barbarous hordes poured down upon it. Both the Saxons and the Franks, in whom we are now interested for Ethelbert and Bertha's sake, were branches of the Teutonic nation.

[1] Dan. ii. 34, 35. 44, 45.

The struggle by which the Franks made themselves masters of Gallia Belgica (the north-east part of France), lasted about 130 years, and was terminating when that of the Saxons in England was commencing. So they were in advance of us, yet were in a very barbarous state, when Clovis was elected king. The title of King, in the Teutonic languages, signified nothing more than paramount chief. The king was elected, but the Franks always chose one of the family of Mérovée, the founder of the dynasty[2]. On the death of a king, his successor was immediately nominated.

Clovis was only fifteen years old when he stood upon a buckler, supported on the shoulders of warrior chiefs, while the shouts and cheers of the multitude proclaimed his accession. This took place in 481, but some historians date the commencement of his reign from 487, when his dominions were extended, and reached from the Rhine to the Loire. Soissons was his first capital but subsequently he made Paris his principal residence, and considerably enlarged the city which existed in Julius Cæsar's time, when it was known as Lutetia, the chief town of the Parisii. It was then entirely confined to the little island on the Seine, which is still called the City.

As Christianity had been introduced into Britain before the coming of the Saxons, so also it had been propagated in Gaul by missionaries of the primitive Church before the coming of the Franks.

[2] Also called "Meerô-wig," sea warrior.

One of those early Christian teachers was Martin, afterwards Bishop of Tours. He was born in Pannonia, the modern Hungary, but his mother was a native of Gaul, which partly accounts for the love which he felt towards that country. Martin was brought up by heathen parents until he entered the Roman army, as did most of the promising youths in the provinces of the Empire. He obtained his commission from a General who commanded in Gaul, went thither first as a young soldier, and served there for several years; but as he had embraced Christianity with fervent zeal, military life became distasteful to him.

In those days the soldier must have needed a hardened heart as well as a hardened constitution, to make his duties agreeable. It was no uncommon thing for a man to be disgusted with the road to glory, and to turn aside, preferring the retirement of hermitage or cloister. Gentle and reflective minds would naturally incline towards this course; and there were those who took it from a higher motive, feeling themselves unequal to resist the strong temptations surrounding them in an age which was polluted by an admixture of Roman corruption and barbarian cruelty and ignorance[3].

God permitted the earth to be flooded with iniquity, but not until He had provided the refuge. Then the ark of Christ's Church, upheld by the

[3] Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops."

never-failing power, rode safely on "the waves of this troublesome world," through the terrible and long-protracted storm, in which the great Roman Empire went down, and that wild sea closed over it.

Martin could not readily procure his discharge; but after a time it was granted, and he retired to Poitiers, where he grew much attached to Hilary, Bishop of that city, and lived very happily, occupying himself in devotional exercises and charitable works. But a heavy trial interrupted that tranquillity: the Church in this part of Gaul was sorely oppressed by Arian heretics. Hilary was expelled from his bishopric, and Martin, either from choice or from necessity, fled to a desert place, where he lived as a hermit. That mode of life was often chosen by those who shunned society and desired perfect retirement. Anchorites not unfrequently amused themselves with writing, and their compositions naturally partook of the peculiarities engendered by complete isolation. Those faculties which are strengthened by contact with the outer world become weakened in solitude, and imagination acquires an undue supremacy.

Recluses, who found loneliness depressing, often cultivated the affections of animals and birds; and so there are numerous stories about the wonderful intelligence of these little pets, and the miraculous punishments inflicted on those who were cruel to them [4].

Some of the legends are pleasingly narrated: the wild primeval forests are vividly put before us;

[4] Wright.

and we are made to feel how Nature wound her poetic spells around the hearts of those who sought refuge in her tangled, pathless woods, or among her mountain crags and caves. Yet, neither anchorite nor monk could dwell with Nature until he had gained dominion over her.

In the sweat of his brow the hermit reared his lowly hermitage: and a little band of brethren worked very hard, strained every nerve with indefatigable energy, to clear the ground, to build the monastery, and to cultivate the land on which they must depend for subsistence. And then we read how the wolf and the bear were tamed, and made to labour like the ox; how St. Basil's lion was faithful and obedient as a dog; and a curious story is told of a stag, which, fleeing from pursuit, took shelter in a hermitage. The hermit protected it, refused to give it up to the hunters, whereupon the infuriated sportsmen took away a cow and seven oxen, which the hermit and his disciples used in their labours. The next morning eight stags came out of the wood and fearlessly approached the recluses, bending their necks to signify their willingness to bear the yoke, to replace the cattle carried off from him who had saved the life of their companion.

All the legends about St. Martin tend to show that his sympathies were more attracted towards human beings than towards animals; his greatest pleasure was to help the poor, to succour those who were in any kind of distress. Like other anchorites, he fed on roots and herbs; and once he

very nearly killed himself by inadvertently eating a poisonous plant. Of course his cure was thought to be miraculous.

When the troubles were over, Martin rejoined his friend, the re-instated Bishop, at Poitiers; and, soon after, Hilary gave him a piece of land near that city, on which he built the first monastery that ever existed in France. In the year 371, Martin was chosen Bishop of Tours; he was the third Bishop of that ancient see. Some of the prelates assembled to assist at the election urged that the meanness of his dress and appearance made him unfit for such a dignity; but these objections were over-ruled, and he was installed in the episcopal chair.

Not long after his elevation, Martin commenced the monastery of Marmoutier, in which he subsequently resided. It soon attained great celebrity, and in process of time grew into a magnificent abbey.

When St. Martin began his work there, the site which he had selected was a desert, enclosed on the one side by steep rocky hills, and on the other by the river. The Bishop and some of the monks had cells built of wood; but the greater number dwelt in holes, or in caves cut out of the rocks. Along the *levée* of the Loire, between Amboise and Tours, the banks rise into projecting heights; to this day, the little villages there are remarkable, because most of their habitations are cut out of the living rock. They are sometimes faced with walls of the rough limestone, prettily

festooned with vines. These dwellings seem comfortable, and most of them are provided with little gardens. It is worth while to climb up to the feudal beacon tower called *Lanterne de La Roche Corbon*, to look down upon the Loire. A row of villas with formal gardens, interspersed with villages, line the bank nearly all the way to Tours, whose cathedral towers are seen in the distance. A round tower rising at the water-side, a gate-house, and a few crumbling foundations of pillars and walls, are the remains of Marmoutier, the most ancient monastic ruin in France [5].

Here Martin was surrounded by about four-score monks, none of whom held any distinct property; they wore garments of coarse camlet, and lived most abstemiously. Nevertheless, there were many persons of quality among them, who had been delicately brought up.

Many Bishops were chosen out of this monastery; for there was not a city which did not desire to have a pastor who had been bred under the discipline of Martin of Tours.

That excellent Bishop devoted a long life to the service of God; he expired on the 8th of November 397, having attained to more than eighty years of age, and having faithfully performed the duties of a chief pastor for more than fifty years.

The utter extinction of idolatry in and around the diocese of Tours, is ascribed to the edifying piety and zealous labours of St. Martin, who was

[5] See Murray's "Handbook of France."

gratefully remembered and honoured throughout Christendom as the glory of Gaul and the light of the Western Church[6].

Several stories are told of St. Martin, besides the well-known one about his dividing his cloak with the beggar. The most pleasing is that which describes his journey into Pannonia to convert his aged parents; it is a charming narrative, embellished by the poetical mythology of the middle ages. The legendary fable has its moral, and the moral may have found its way to the hearts of readers.

In the legends attached to the lives of the saints, the superstition is often ascribable to the historian rather than to the individual whose character he portrays. Gregory of Tours, the most celebrated of Martin's successors, was the first who wrote his life. More than half the writings of that ancient standard author are taken up with miracles and wonders. But the same may be said generally of all the writers of the sixth and seventh centuries, who mixed up serious and deeply interesting matter with the most comical absurdities. Our quaint old Fuller, having related one of these stories, exclaims, "Fie for shame! he needs an hard place on his face that reports it, and a soft place in his head that believes it."

St. Patrick belongs to this mythical period. He is one of those holy men who, centuries after they were laid in their graves, were canonized, and thus

[6] Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints."

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brought out into the moonshine of ages darker than those in which they lived. The ancient biographers of Ireland's patron saint have overlaid his story with such a profusion of legends that it is impossible entirely to disentangle truth from fiction; and if we could not get beyond these mediæval compositions, the remark of Tillemont, a French historian, would be undeniable. He says, with reference to his own "Mémoire de St. Patrice," "Il n'y a rien de certain." Happily we have a deeper well-spring whence we can draw clearer information. In the Book of Armagh[7], which is a very ancient and curious collection of MSS., there are two tracts called "The Confession of St. Patrick," and "The Life of St. Patrick." The former is considered genuine, and is thought to have been copied from Patrick's own handwriting. "The Life" is in much the same style, and is certainly of high antiquity. It is much more simple than the compositions of later ages.

"The Confession of St. Patrick," says Dr. Todd, "is older than any of the extant biographies of the saint; for they almost all quote and adopt its words. . . . Although this tract is not free from superstition, it contains none of those ridiculous miracles which the later biographers of St. Patrick delighted to record. It is altogether such an account of himself, as a missionary of that age, circumstanced as St. Patrick was, might be expected to compose. It contains nothing inconsistent

[7] For a full account of the Book of Armagh, see a memoir of St. Patrick by J. H. Todd, D.D.

with the century in which it professes tō have been written. . . . . The copy of 'The Confession,' in the Book of Armagh, is shorter than the copies found in later MSS.; and the suspicion arises, that the tract may have been interpolated after the date of the original autograph copy, from which that in the Book of Armagh was transcribed." The tract in the Book of Armagh furnishes abundant proof of the primitive purity of St. Patrick's faith, contains information respecting his missionary work, and gives us glimpses into his personal history.

In this Confession, St. Patrick speaks of the Britanniæ in the plural number as his country, and as the country of his relations and friends. Whether that plural name signified only the British Isles, or whether it also included the neighbouring British colony called British Armorica, or Gaulish Britain, afterwards better known as Brittany, seems to be an open question. St. Patrick tells us, that when he was about sixteen years of age, he was living with his parents in or near a village called Bonavem Taberniæ. The surrounding country was infested with hordes of pirates, bandits from over the sea. Some of his father's servants, and numbers of the country people fell into the hands of these barbarous robbers. One day Patrick himself was taken, with many others; they were carried away to Ireland, and sold there as slaves. Patrick draws an affecting picture of his life during the six years of his captivity, and there are breathings of penitence, which seem to show that con-

science reproached him with respect to the brighter days he had spent in his father's house. Under the power of Divine grace, and the genial influences of Nature, the blessed truths of the Gospel, which had been planted by his parents in his mind, sprang up to strengthen and comfort him. He was often on the mountains, with no companions but the animals he watched and guarded. Loneliness led him to commune with God in prayer. He thought he saw an angel, who brought him messages from heaven; in obedience to which, he escaped, and made his way to the sea-coast, where he fell in with the captain of a ship, who restored him to his parents. He seems to have returned to the home whence he had been taken by the robbers. But where was Bonavem Taberniæ? In what part of the Britanniæ was it situated? Was it Patrick's native place, and had his family long been rooted there? The tracts in the Book of Armagh leave these questions unanswered. As regards "The Confession," this is not surprising; for that ancient MS. was certainly not written as an autobiography; and as regards "The Life," the first leaf of that MS. is wanting: the very page on which he is likely to have mentioned his birthplace particularly, and also to have alluded to his relationship to St. Martin, is gone! All his biographers state, that his mother was nearly related to the celebrated Bishop of Tours: they are unanimous on that point, and some say that St. Patrick's mother was St. Martin's sister. The word sister was sometimes used in a more ex-

tended sense than that in which we use it; but it always meant direct blood relationship. Dr. Todd mentions several places which have been supposed to be the "Bonavem Taberniæ" of "St. Patrick's Confession." All the strong probabilities seem to be divided between two localities; all the evidences, that are worth any thing, point either to the British colony in Gaul, or to the banks of the Clyde, between Dumbarton and Glasgow. There is a very ancient MS. which connects these places one with the other, and, if it be genuine, thus reconciles apparently conflicting statements. The hymn of Fiacc says expressly, that Patrick was born at Menthur; that place is now identified with a village near Dumbarton. The hymn describes how the family left their northern home. They went from the Britons of Alchaid, and crossed the Iccian Sea, southward, on a journey to the Britons who were on the sea of Icht; because they had relations there. The names of the father, mother, and seven children are given: Patrick had five sisters and one brother. "Now the mother of these children was of the Franks, and she was a near relative (sister) to Martin. At that time seven sons of the King of Britain came in ships, and plundered the Britons of Armorica Letha, where Patrick and his family were, and they wounded Patrick's father, and they carried off Patrick and his sister Lupait, and they sold Lupait at Conaille Multheune, and Patrick in the north of Dalaraide." It has been ascertained that Alchaid, whence the family party is said to have

started, was a name belonging to the neighbourhood of the Clyde. The meaning of the adjective Letha is now obscure; probably it pointed to a particular part of Armorica which had been peopled by the Scotii, as both the Scotch and Irish were called in those days.

We may form some idea of the manner in which the families of the earth had been crushed, mingled, scattered, and Romanized by the power of Imperial Rome, if we glance over the pages in which Mr. Wright has put before us the strange assemblage of races that were scattered over Britain, in a multitude of small colonies; a few families of fellow-countrymen composing each little band of emigrants. If, while looking through that list of names, derived from many languages, we seek for one particular race,—the Gauls, for instance: we find Gauls at Lymne, near Hythe; at Reculver, at Chester, in different parts of Cumberland, at Cramond and Castle-hill in Scotland, and along the wall of Antoninus, which was an immense continuous rampart of earth and turf, extending from the Frith of Forth to the mouth of the Clyde. On the line of Hadrian's Wall the inhabitants of the different towns were particularly varied in their races[8]. Surely the Great Husbandman thoroughly prepared His ground for the reception of His seed! While Martin was casting it far and wide from the banks of the Loire, his sister may have been sowing it on the banks of the Clyde. Her descendants

[8] "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 254 to 259.

might have sprung also from an old family of Gaul, might be considered Gallo-Romans though they dwelt in "the Britanniæ," and they may have returned to Armorica, according to the "Hymn of Fiacc," which is, we are told, of high antiquity, and it bears no internal evidence against its own authenticity.

Although the story of St. Patrick's early life is so differently related; yet from all accounts we gather, that his heart had not been hardened by the misfortunes of his youth. On the contrary, when he had regained his liberty, he cherished the most compassionate feelings towards the ignorant pagans whose yoke he had borne; he longed to go back and lead them to the Saviour. Under altered circumstances, and through changing scenes, Patrick still remembered green Erin; and before the vigour of his manhood had departed, he again set foot upon her shore, not as a slave, but as Bishop of Hibernia, which diocese included all that was then looked upon as the "Far West[9]." The captive shepherd-boy, who had endured the sorrows of his early life, and watched his master's sheep in the spirit of the son of Jesse, was chosen to gather a countless flock of immortal souls into the fold of Christ. Patrick usually addressed himself first to the kings and chiefs, and through them, obtained access to the multitude. He made many converts among the Irish bards, who formed an hereditary and sacerdotal class.

[9] See Note VI. in Appendix.

Among them, he found many of his most faithful disciples; for the bards readily embraced Christianity, and fraternized with the monks. Each monastery had its bard,—at once poet and historian—who chronicled wars, alliances, and other remarkable events; and every three years these national annalists met together to compare their narratives.

The voice of blind old Ossian was then sometimes heard in the halls of Tara, the ancient capital of druidical Ireland, where the great king Niall, an ancestor of St. Columba, was reigning over all the north-western part of the island. His sovereign sway extended over the two shores of the Scottish sea, in both Hibernia and Caledonia[1].

Ossian, and others who touched the harp "in Tara's halls" were instructed and baptized by Patrick; and Patrick in his turn listened to the long epic of Celtic heroes, to the genuine poetry, sublime and wild, as Nature always is in her own simplicity[2].

For more than thirty years, St. Patrick held up the light of divine truth in Ireland, and then he died, leaving the country almost entirely converted, and full of schools and religious houses.

The missionary achievements of Martin, Patrick, and Columba, are like the shining links of a precious chain. What Martin was to Gaul, Patrick became to Ireland; and Columba pondered over the examples of his predecessors, and went forth

[1] Montalembert. [2] Ibid.

from Ireland to carry on the tidings of salvation, and the labours of love. Long after his death, when the Danes were ravaging the Western Islands, the monks of Iona removed his bones, conveyed them to Down Patrick, in Ulster, and laid them beside those of the venerated saint of his father-land, whom he had heartily honoured and zealously followed. So the mortal remains of Patrick and Columba rest together, awaiting the resurrection to eternal life.

We must now return to Queen Bertha's native country, from which we have wandered away. Christianity seems to have been more deeply rooted in Gaul before the coming of the Franks, than it was in Britain before the coming of the Saxons, if we may judge from contrasting facts. In the one case, the conqueror and his warriors embraced Christianity, the religion of the country they were subduing; in the other case, the victorious barbarians not only destroyed the churches, but also perverted the faith of most of those who did not retreat before the invaders, but remained attached to the soil.

It is related that Clovis, when contending with the Franks of Germany in a tremendous battle near Cologne, feeling apprehensive as to the result, made a vow, that, if he gained the victory, he would worship the God of his queen Clotilda, a Christian princess from Burgundia. He won the battle, and, true to his vow, was soon afterwards baptized, and made liberal offerings to the Church on the occasion. The conversion of the king was

an event of great political importance; and as we see no evidence of a spiritual change, the suspicion that worldly policy was the motive power which led him into the Church, naturally suggests itself. He was wishing to make himself master of an ignorant, but, at the same time, a Christian population; and as soon as he had declared himself to be united to the people by a common faith, they ceased to resist him, and readily opened their gates to the Christian king and his army. He immediately entered all the towns north of the Loire, as far as the borders of the colony of British refugees who were escaping from the Saxons.

"We cannot at all estimate the character of Clovis, without reference to the age in which he lived. In him we see two men—the barbarian chief, and the neophyte Christian. On the one side, we are astonished to see so much barbarous ignorance and cruelty; and, on the other side, we are perhaps still more surprised to find strong aspirations after improvement, and to see his powerful will set upon working out the elevation of himself and his people; his uncommon talents and untiring energy devoted to urging on the progress of civilization, and the establishment of the holy religion which he so imperfectly understood. Clovis was undoubtedly an instrument formed and used by Divine Providence to spread Christianity among the Franks, and to break in pieces and fuse together the savage tribes which had overspread Europe, and to mingle them with the remnants which remained of the civilized Roman world. He ex-

tended and confirmed the authority of the Church from the shores of the North Sea to the Pyrenees, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the forests of Germany. The Bishop of Rome, grateful to the powerful chief, conferred on him the title of Eldest Son of the Church, which he has transmitted to his successors[3]."

Montalembert tells us that Clovis and Benedict founded France; and that Clovis, the youthful king, began to reign in the year of St. Benedict's birth. They were not fellow-countrymen, the one being a Frank and the other an Italian; and they never met face to face. But while the kingdom of France and the city of Paris were growing into importance under the auspices of Clovis, the monastery of Monte Cassino, the capital of the monastic order, was rising up among the Apennines under the direction of Benedict. He erected it on the summit of a somewhat isolated and thickly wooded mountain. In the wood there was a very ancient temple to Apollo; and there, so near Rome, in the heart of Christendom, two hundred years after Constantine, Italian peasants were still sacrificing to false gods, till Benedict persuaded them to renounce idolatry. Deep down in the valley below, another large house was built for Scholastica, Benedict's twin sister, who presided over a community of women[4].

"Monte Cassino was destined to become the most celebrated monastery in the Catholic universe; celebrated especially because there the great

[3] Bonnechose. [4] Montalembert.

legislator of the monks of the West wrote his rule, and at the same time formed the type which was to serve as a model to innumerable communities submitted to that sovereign code, which was superior to every thing that could be found up to that time in either Roman or barbarian laws, or in the habits of civil society.

"Since the days of Anthony[5], there had been monks and abbots, but no kind of order had existed; monastic order originated in the rule of St. Benedict. Afterwards, other religious orders were instituted; but that of St. Benedict was most widely diffused, and continued to be generally preferred. The illustrious monastic lawgiver died in the spring of the year 543. He survived his sister only forty days, and was buried by her side, in a sepulchre made upon the spot where the altar of Apollo had been thrown down. His biographer, Pope Gregory the Great, tells us that, on the night after his death, two monks—one of whom was in the monastery, and the other on a journey—had the same vision. They saw a multitude of stars form into a shining pathway, which extended towards the east from Monte Cassino up to heaven; and heard a voice, which said to them that by that road Benedict, the well-beloved of God, had ascended to heaven[6]."

That poetical conception of the ancient writer to whose earnest piety we owe so much, is not lost upon us; although we fully agree in the sentiments

[5] Anthony, the first monk and abbot, a native of Egypt.

[6] Montalembert.

expressed by the great poet who has but lately passed along the mysterious pathway between the footstool and the throne of God:—

> "We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
> Our neighbour and our work farewell;
> Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
> For sinful man beneath the sky.
>
> "The trivial round, the common task,
> Will furnish all we ought to ask—
> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To bring us daily nearer God [6]."

About a year before the death of the patriarch of Monte Cassino, messengers had arrived at that place from the Bishop of Mans, requesting the Benedictines to establish a monastery in his diocese. In accordance with that petition, Glenfenil was founded in Anjou. That interesting spot, often mentioned in French history, is now hidden and lost among the vineyards on the fertile banks of the Loire.

"Thus," says Montalembert, "a new force was introduced into France. Wherever the armies of cruel, disorderly soldiers had passed with fire, and sword, and death, other armies came to encamp in silence; other colonies formed, and devoted themselves to heal the miseries of invasion, and to gather the fruits of peace—that host of black-robed monks, intrepid and patient."

[6] It is worthy of note, that the Benedictine fraternity produced martyrs in the cause of the Reformation. One of these, Henry Forest, suffered at St. Andrew's. Reading Tyndale's New Testament was his chief crime.

As the whelps of the lion tear their prey to pieces, so the sons of Clovis destroyed their country, fiercely dividing it again and again, till Clothaire grasped all, and more than all, that had belonged to his father. He was the youngest of the four brothers; but at last he stood alone, having attained to that position through the shedding of much innocent blood, and by committing the most unnatural crimes.

Clothaire was never as powerful as Clovis had been, because he was not as much respected, either by his neighbours or his subjects; his dominions grew more extensive than his father's, but he was more barbarous. Therefore the country must have retrograded very far under his rule, had not the growing power of the Church given a counteracting movement onward and upward.

The writings of Gregory of Tours, the venerable historian of France, vividly put before us scenes of discord and violence which occurred in the world, and peaceful scenes of the daily routine in retreats provided by the Church. Gregory was gifted with the talent of painting in words. Augustin Thierry tells us that we must go on to Froissart before we find an author who equals Gregory of Tours in the art of putting characters before the reader with dramatic effect, and bringing them out in dialogue. It seems strange that such a mind as his could be so clouded with superstition. What an extraordinary power that must have been, which could thus blind the best

and wisest! It was a darkness from without, not from within, to those who had the hidden light in the heart. That mighty power of superstition was permitted and overruled for good, through generations in which a large proportion of all classes feared neither God nor man. It was well that they should fear their own chimerical fancies; that the oppressor should fear to force the helpless from the sanctuaries in which they had taken refuge; that barbarian soldiers, ravaging, consuming, sweeping with the besom of destruction, should stop short in their career, on being warned by their leader that the country they were entering was under the protection of the blessed St. Martin. He was supposed to be the special guardian of the land for many miles round that city over which he had watched in life, and under which he lay in death.

Though Gregory of Tours seldom mentions himself, yet, as we read his works, we see in him a bright example of the salutary influence exercised by the bishops of the Church in those lawless times. We see him living and working to the glory of God, resisting evil, promoting good, being too much interested in others to think much about himself.

As we read the pages of his history, we feel that the great mind which produced them was sometimes saddened and even deeply discouraged by the horrors which he witnessed and chronicled. Gregory strove with all his might to persuade the Merovingian princes to stifle their jealousies and

to be at peace one with the other. In the introduction to his fifth book, he thus eloquently addresses the hard-hearted and profligate sons of Clovis:

"I am weary of relating all the miseries of these wars, which waste the kingdoms of the Franks. . . . What are you doing, O kings? What do you desire? What do you seek? You dwell in pleasant houses, your cellars overflow with wine, your store-houses with corn and oil, your treasure-chests are filled with gold and silver. The grace of God alone is wanting to you, because you covet and take by violence the goods of others. If civil war is sweet to thee, O king, engage in that of the spirit against the flesh, and overcome thy vices by thy virtues, so that thou be no longer the bond-slave of Satan, but the freed man serving Christ."

But tracing out some of those characters which he has so indelibly fixed on the pages of history, must have been a delightful task to the old historian; especially in the cases of his personal friends, who shared with him the aspirations and anxieties of his own times. One of these was Radigund, whose story will not be out of place here, as it illustrates some of the remarkable features of the age. Thierry has condensed it in his "Récits des Temps Mérovingiens," from which the following sketch is taken.

King Clothaire was reigning over Neustria, a country of considerable extent in the north-east of France. It was a fertile and beautiful land, watered

by the tributaries of the Seine. Soissons, its capital, was a bishop's see in the first ages of the Church: the bishop had a right to consecrate the kings of Neustria, which was often called the kingdom of Soissons, or Le Soissonnais, after its chief city, not far from which stood the royal Villa of Braine, in which the king usually resided. It was a very large building, surrounded with porticoes, in the Roman style of architecture. Within that enclosure was a court-yard, round which were ranged the lodgings for the officers of the palace, and those of the *leudes*, who seem to have been much what the king's thanes were in Saxon countries—freed men who had sworn to be faithful to the king.

Neighbouring cabins were occupied by a great many families, whose members of both sexes were continually engaged in various kinds of handiwork. There were the smiths, who wrought in precious metals, and those who worked in iron and steel to produce the military equipments so much in request. There were curriers and weavers; all kinds of fabrics, from the coarsest to the finest, were woven there, in wool, linen, and silk; some were dyed in rich colours, and others were embroidered in silk and gold.

Farm buildings and premises, stables, cattle-sheds, sheep-folds, and granaries, completed the Villa Royale. It was at Braine that Clothaire kept, in a secret apartment, the great chests, with three locks, which contained his riches in gold, precious

jewels, and vases. It was there that he convoked in synod all the bishops of Gaul; there he received ambassadors, and presided over the national assemblies of the "Champ de Mars," which were followed by magnificent festivities. Boars and bucks were roasted whole, and served up on the spit in the great hall; and there barrels of wine were staved in. It was at Braine that the king and his warriors amused themselves with military exercises and with hunting, and also with fishing and swimming in the river Aisne.

Clothaire was still a young man, full of energy and ambition. He had extended his dominions by injustice and cruelty; but he was not yet the sole surviving son of Clovis, ruling the whole of France. His brother Theodoric (or Thierry) held the neighbouring kingdom of Austrasia,—the chief towns of which were Metz and Rheims,—and Childebert, another son of Clovis, reigned at Paris. Theodoric had been for some time past engaged in war with the Thuringians; and, becoming tired of the contest, he asked Clothaire to assist him in terminating it. Clothaire having consented, they resolved on uniting their forces and marching into the enemy's country. Thuringia lay to the south of the Hartz mountains, between the rivers Fulda and Saal, and included the spot which has since become interesting as the birth-place of Martin Luther—now Eisleben, in Lower Saxony.

It was a wide-spread country, but very thinly populated; the wild beasts far outnumbered the

men ; as the land was covered with forests, and the inhabitants cared for nothing but chasing, or taming and training, the animals. Not one of the scattered villages was worthy to be called a town. Yet the extent of Thuringia, and the courage of its people, rendered it one of the most important of the Teutonic kingdoms. There had been misery and confusion there before the Franks invaded it; King Berther, an inoffensive man, having been assassinated by his brother.

It was in the year 529 that Clothaire and Theodoric set out on their expedition. The Thuringians lost several battles; the bravest of their warriors were cut to pieces, their country was ravaged with fire and sword, and they were forced to become tributaries to the Franks. The victorious kings divided the booty and the prisoners equally. Two royal children fell to the lot of the King of Neustria, —the son and daughter of the late unfortunate King of Thuringia. Radigund, the little girl, was very beautiful, and naturally graceful, though quite untrained and in heathen ignorance.

Clothaire took both the children to his royal villa, and caused them to be baptized. The engaging appearance and manners of the girl were so attractive to the rude, stern king, that he resolved on educating her with a view to making her his wife. He therefore placed her in one of his royal houses on the Somme, and there surrounded her with persons qualified to give her the best education which could be procured, such as raised her far above

others of her age, who usually learned nothing but spinning, weaving, and riding after the hounds. Radigund was taught to read Roman literature, and the works of ecclesiastical writers, and poetry, for which she evinced great taste. This mental cultivation added to her attraction, even in the eyes of the king, though she grew pensive and sad, often recurring to the sorrows of her early life; and she seemed more and more to dread the future which lay before her. As the time appointed for the marriage arrived, her repugnance to it overcame every other feeling; and she made her escape, but was discovered and taken to Soissons, where the wedding was celebrated with much pomp.

Clothaire, though a Christian, had not renounced the heathen custom of polygamy; but Radigund occupied a position superior to that of all the other women of the household, in virtue of her royal birth, and by the special favour with which the king regarded her. The bishops of France were at that time tolerating the Frankish customs which they abhorred, through fear of alienating the barbarians.

We will pass over Queen Radigund's miserable life in that Villa Royale; miserable, indeed, it must have been, though the king lavished on her, as tokens of his regard, the richest presents and the highest honours. He seems really to have felt more esteem and love for her than for any other human being, though he was incapable of any sentiment worthy to be called affection; and at last

he grieved her on the tenderest point. She was exceedingly fond of her brother, the only relation from whom she had not been separated. The young man had been retained as a hostage by Clothaire; and, becoming impatient of restraint, he had dared to express some patriotic sentiment, or some impotent threat, on which the cruel king caused him to be put to death.

Radigund was overpowered by the shock; but, rousing herself, she determined on a course which she had long been considering. Dissimulating her intentions, she asked permission to go to Medard, the aged Bishop of Noyon, to seek from him religious counsel and consolation. The king made no objection, for he was annoyed by her tears and lamentations, and he thought the bishop would advise her to submit to her husband's will.

She found the bishop in his church; and, as soon as her agitation would permit her to speak, she exclaimed, "Holy father, I wish to leave the world, and to change my dress; I beg you to dedicate me to the Lord." Medard, taken thus by surprise, asked for time to reflect. It was indeed a perilous thing to break a royal marriage, contracted according to the laws and customs of the Franks, and which the Church had sanctioned and solemnized. Medard felt the struggle between zeal and prudence; but, before either could gain the ascendency, a loud tumult from without interrupted the inward conflict. A band of nobles and soldiers from the palace had followed the queen. Radi-

gund fled in terror to a sacristy adjoining the church; but, recovering her resolute spirit, she devised a plan for at once overcoming both the timidity of the bishop and the boldness of the warriors. With her own hands she cut off her long hair, and hastily threw a nun's dress over her own; then, assuming a solemn demeanour, she quietly walked back into the church. Old Medard, sorrowful and irresolute, was still surrounded by those impetuous men, who were rudely warning him that he had better have nothing to do with giving the veil to a woman who was married to the king.

They were all startled by Radigund's re-appearance in the altered dress. "Bishop Medard," she exclaimed in a firm clear voice, "if you fear to dedicate me to the Lord who is above all, as I desire, you fear man more than you fear God; and you will have to answer for it when the Great Shepherd requires of you the souls of His sheep."

No voice broke the silence which followed these words, until the bishop pronounced those which annulled Radigund's marriage; and then, placing his hands on her head, as she knelt before him, he consecrated her a deaconess in the Church of Christ.

The armed soldiers stood by, looking on. Deeds of violence were not strange to them, but they dared not seize the queen in the church; and, after they had heard her pronounce the words by which she renounced the world, and those by which the bishop declared her to be con-

secrated, they dared not force her back to the throne.

But Radigund was afraid to remain at Noyon; she did not feel sure that the king would not assert his rights as her husband, and take her from the sanctuary. So, leaving her purple dress, her massive gold waist-band, bracelets, and other ornaments on the altar, she turned away to hide herself in some distant monastery, where she might live unknown. Free to choose her road, she made her way to Orleans, and there embarked on the Loire, and went down to Tours, where she took up her abode in one of the several asylums which had arisen in the neighbourhood of St. Martin's tomb. It may have been the house in which Clotilda, the aged widow of Clovis, watched and waited for death: they may have met.

Radigund occupied herself in works of usefulness and charity, and endeavoured to resume the studious habits which she had acquired in her youth; but she felt deeply the trials of her position, and never ventured beyond the precincts of the sanctuary.

Meanwhile, the bishops were doing their utmost to appease the anger of the king. St. Germain, then Bishop of Auxerre, seems to have had more influence over Clothaire than any other person.

The bridle which was held by the rulers of the Church, did, in some measure, curb the spirit of that ferocious monarch; although his passions were still so ungovernable as to appear quite unre-

strained. No other power checked him, for he trampled under foot all natural ties, political rights, and international justice.

The way in which he had brought up Radigund was the best thing he had ever done; and no doubt, in that matter, he had allowed himself to be guided by the bishops. He felt the separation from her with a feeling deeper than that of wounded pride alone; for he really cared for her more than he did for any other being in the world.

Radigund's feeling towards the king could not have been that of indifference; she owed to him all that she possessed—even life, and admission into the Christian Church, and the education which she so fully appreciated. When the excitement had passed away, and the quiet hours came, she must have thought of him more in sorrow than in anger.

After a time, Clothaire discovered where the queen had taken refuge. Accompanied by a band of attendants, he set off for Tours in a state of vehement excitement. Immediately on hearing this, St. Germain hastened after him.

On arriving at the convent, Clothaire was informed that Radigund had fled, and her late companions either could not or would not tell whither she had gone.

Though almost maddened by disappointment, mortification, and rage, yet Clothaire never thought of omitting the customary tribute of respect to St. Martin's memory, then rendered by every Christian

who passed by the grave of one of those first heralds who had there proclaimed the Saviour King of Kings.

St. Germain understood the barbarian mind; he knew that external impressions strongly affect the uncultivated imagination, and even touch the stony heart on which religious teaching seems to have been wasted. The thoughtful bishop remembered a little spot of hallowed ground on which he and the unrighteous king might meet. Beside St. Martin's tomb they stood together. The bishop then fell upon his knees, in token of the earnestness of his appeal; and his tears mingled with his words, as he besought the king to have pity on his own immortal soul, by turning from his evil ways; and, as he interceded for the queen, King Clothaire's proud spirit was vanquished. Even in the presence of his soldiers, he prostrated himself before the minister of God, openly confessed his trangressions, and acknowledged himself to be unworthy of Radigund. He said that his eyes were opened, and that he could see she was too pure and good for him.

Thus, with a rapidity incomprehensible to us, did those half-civilized princes pass from the excess of savage pride and atrocious wickedness to the most passionate demonstrations of contrition and humility. We must not conclude that they were altogether insincere, even when we see the penitent fall under the next temptation which assails him; and certainly, in this case of Clothaire, his subse-

quent conduct towards Radigund seems to indicate some change of feeling.

The fugitive had safely escaped to a convent near Poitiers. Through the intervention of St. Germain, a correspondence was commenced between her and the king, which ended in a perfectly amicable arrangement.

Every thing which had belonged to Radigund, as queen, was restored to her; the castle on the Somme, in which she had been brought up, which the king had given her the day after their marriage, as the "morning gift," according to the custom of all Teutonic nations; and many other rich presents which Clothaire had bestowed upon the wife whom he delighted to honour, though he did not curb his passions for her sake.

The king also gave Radigund a very large estate near the gates of the city of Poitiers, and there she built a large convent. Notwithstanding her eager impatience, and the assistance afforded her by the Bishop of Poitiers, several years elapsed before the building was finished. It was a Roman villa with all its appurtenances—gardens, porticoes, saloons, baths, and a church. The external walls were high, and strengthened with towers, which gave a military aspect to this quiet retreat for women.

The day on which the queen entered the convent was made a day of popular rejoicing. All the streets and open spaces in the city of Poitiers, which she was to pass through, were filled with

immense crowds of people; and the house-tops were covered with spectators, all eager to see her pass into the convent.

She was on foot, accompanied by a great number of young girls, who were going to share her seclusion; her rank and her admirable qualities having attracted many towards her. As they approached the convent, Radigund said to her companions, in the figurative language of the times, "See the strong walls, which will defend us against the deluge of passions and the storms of the world."

It was about the year 550 that Radigund began life in her new home; that peaceful life which she had long desired, which accorded with the dreams of her ardent imagination, as far as actual experience can agree with the visions of hope. It was a sort of compromise between monastic austerity, and the enervating vanity then prevailing in society. Literary work was the chief occupation of the community, in which all were bound to take their part for at least two hours during the day. Each had her appointed task of reading and writing to perform; hours were also fixed for religious exercise, for manual work, and recreation. One of the sisters read aloud, while others were weaving, embroidering, or sewing; and the most intelligent were occupied in another room in transcribing manuscripts to multiply copies.

Although the rules were severe on some points, as regarded abstinence from meat and wine; yet

they allowed many of the comforts and even the pleasures of the world, the frequent use of the bath (which was forbidden in some convents), and various specified amusements. The foundress and the dignitaries of the convent received, not only bishops and clergymen, but also laymen of distinction and their families.

A sumptuous table was often provided for visitors and friends, when delicate dishes were served up; and sometimes the feast was magnificent. The queen courteously did the honours, but abstained from partaking of such things as were contrary to her rule.

Occasionally, dramatic entertainments took place; the characters being sustained by the young girls placed there for education, who performed their parts in suitable costume. The plays popular at that time were those of Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea, and the celebrated Gregory of Nazianzus, Patriarch of Constantinople, the father of Christian poetry. These plays, written in the fourth century, were taken from Scripture history, and composed on the Greek model, the choruses being converted into Christian hymns. A century or two later, every trace of dramatic performance seems to have disappeared; we do not meet with it again until the middle of the thirteenth century.

When Radigund had firmly established the regulations of her house, she abdicated the monastic throne, desiring to spend her time chiefly in literary pursuits. She chose a woman much

younger than herself as abbess, to whom she gave absolute authority, placing herself on the same footing with the other sisters of the convent. But she had known Agnes from childhood, and was exceedingly attached to her. Agnes was of Gaulish extraction, and, like most of the women of that race, was gentle and domestic in mind and habits.

Though Radigund devoted much time to study, yet she took her part in the active, and even in the menial work of the house—cooked the food, swept the house, carried wood and water, as these duties came to her, in turn with the other sisters. But, notwithstanding this appearance of equality, Radigund was really queen of the convent, not only as being the foundress, and by the prestige of her royal birth, but also by her superiority of mind, her experience and goodness. It was she who maintained a rule or slackened it, as she thought fit; she who gave advice to all, who steadied the wavering, checked the impetuous, encouraged the timid, or urged on the slothful. Every day she read and explained a portion of Scripture, often putting in a little word of tenderness, which fixed itself on some listener's heart. Her pupils committed very long passages to memory, and she expected every one to repeat through the whole Book of Psalms. Radigund became exceedingly fond of the girls who were entrusted to her for education, called them her young plants, and lavished on them the warmest expressions of affection. She is described as most fascinating in appearance

and manner, possessing both personal advantages and dignity of deportment.

King Clothaire resigned himself to the separation, without losing his esteem for her, or even the pride which he still felt in his retired queen. Her retreat must be the most magnificent, the most celebrated of monasteries; and therefore he continually added to the lands which supported it, and to its rich and elegant furniture and ornaments. And in return for all this, Radigund could only give her prayers, which, no doubt, were earnest and constant [3].

We may suppose that sometimes she met with opportunities of guiding him in the right direction, otherwise she could hardly have obtained that influence which we are told she exercised over his sons, especially Charibert and Chilperic: the former of whom greatly admired her writings.

Several of the daughters of that royal family were brought up under Radigund's guardianship: Gregory of Tours mentions some by name, and tells us it was the seminary in which the daughters of the Frankish kings received their education. One of our poets has said, "Earth hath its angels"—Radigund was the angel to the house of Clothaire: he did not lose the reward promised to those who take pity on the helpless.

Radigund felt a strong desire to obtain for her monastery a piece of the true cross. She had been

[3] Her history, written after her death, was entitled, "Mémoire de Radégonde, Reine de France."

taught to believe that it had been found on Mount Calvary by the Empress Helena, who had placed part of it at Jerusalem, and conveyed a portion to Constantinople[4]. Radigund sent to Justin, Emperor of the East, to beg for a particle of the precious treasure; and he sent her a scrap of mouldering wood, set round with precious stones. Poor Radigund valued it more than all the rich presents which King Clothaire could bestow. The day of its arrival was solemnized by a religious service: the poet Fortunatus composed two hymns for that occasion, which are still used in the Roman Catholic Church.

Venantius Fortunatus was on very friendly terms with the ladies of Ste. Croix, as the convent was called after the arrival of the relic. He was by birth an Italian; but France claims him as one of her earliest poets, as he entirely quitted his native country. Possibly the pleasure which he felt in Radigund's society may have induced him to remain near her. She made him her secretary, and a sort of steward to her estate; he subsequently took Orders, and became a priest of the metropolitan church at Poitiers. He was raised to the Bishopric of that city, but not until some time after Radigund's death.

The poetical talent with which those friends were gifted, formed the strong bond of sympathy between them. Fortunatus wrote in Latin, the

[4] The Empress Helena was the mother of Constantine the Great. Some historians say she was a British lady.

polite language of those days; his compositions are numerous and varied; one of his most admired poems is that on the martyrdom of St. Alban. His panegyrics on the Frankish princes, and on the too notorious Brunehaut, are absurdly flattering; but in them we discern the taste of the age, which the courtly poet could not venture to offend.

He has described some of Radigund's early recollections; for even when she was grey-headed, she liked to tell her friend about the rude wooden palace in Thuringia, and the wild forests around it; to recall the bright and the awful scenes which were so indelibly imprinted on her memory; and even then she would shed tears over the fate of those whom she had loved so deeply, and could never cease to regret. But Fortunatus was not always entertained with sad recollections. They amused themselves with making verses on the little events of their monotonous lives; on little presents given and received, on fruits and flowers, and all sorts of trifles.

The poet seems to have admired floral decorations; for we read that, on one occasion, when he was invited to partake of a repast at Ste. Croix, the table was covered with mats of fragrant flowers, on which the dishes were placed, while the walls of the apartment were hung with garlands. Many such indications prove that these recluses were not so dead to the world as to be insensible to its innocent pleasures.

Gregory of Tours often refreshed himself by

staying with Radigund, and constantly corresponded with her. The noble Aredius of Limoges paid her an annual visit. We read also of Junian, a lord of Poitou, whose esteem for the queen was so great, that he closely followed her example in self-denial and charity; and he wore no other garments than the woollen robes which she spun for him.

It seems that these friends had conversed together respecting the mysterious intermediate state, respecting which so little is revealed to us, that we must be careful not to offend by presuming to search into the hidden things which belong unto God. Radigund and Junian had agreed to pray for each other after death; but, as if the Almighty designed to show that the departed do not need the prayers of the living, they died on the same day, and at the same hour.

Monastic rules became afterwards much more stringent and severe; but Bede, who lived a hundred years later, seems also to have had free access to ladies' apartments, and to have been treated by them with friendly familiarity.

In the earliest times the superiors of religious houses were chosen for their piety and discretion; but in after ages they were appointed from less worthy motives; and then evils grew and multiplied, and more stringent restrictions became necessary.

Radigund's time was much taken up with literary occupations; she wrote several works highly esteemed and useful in their day, and by her letters to the kings and other influential personages, she

maintained political power. Those were dark days; but they would have been darker, had it not been for that cloistered queen of France.

We will not track the cruelly aggressive steps by which King Clothaire made himself master of the kingdoms which had belonged to the other branches of his father's family: the last fell to him by right of inheritance, as his brother Childebert, King of Paris, died in 558, and left no son. Therefore, Clothaire attained the summit of his ambition; he grasped more than Clovis had conquered, and could levy an army more numerous than the Roman Empire could command during the last three centuries of its existence. But he found that he had grasped a fleeting shadow, restless as his own ambition. In less than three years, he was in his grave; and, for some time before his death, he suffered too much to have the least enjoyment of life. His last words are said to have been, "What must be the power of the King of Heaven, who makes the most powerful kings of the earth to die thus when He pleases!" His four sons interred him honourably at Soissons, and then divided his dominions.

The partition made at the death of Clovis seems to have served as a basis for this second division; but as the boundaries were so different, there were necessarily great alterations. The paternal kingdom of Neustria, with its ancient capital, Soissons, was assigned to Chilperic; Charibert, the eldest of the brothers, took Paris and Aquitaine.

He was already past the prime of life, and more peacefully inclined than any of his predecessors had been; he seems to have aimed at establishing, rather than extending, his kingdom.

Charibert was a great admirer of the old Romans, and read classical authors with a view to profiting by the precepts and examples they set before him; so he was considered a wonderfully clever man by his ignorant courtiers; and flattery led him into the folly of pedantry. He embellished his conversation with Latin quotations, which were often absurdly inopportune; and he wasted a good deal of time in writing verses, for which accomplishment he had no special gift. But his literary productions appear to have been more successful than those of his brother Chilperic, which Gregory thus describes: "His lines limp, without the power of keeping on their feet; for, through ignorance, he has put long syllables for short ones, and short ones for long ones."

Bertha was the only child of Charibert and Ingoberga his queen, whose domestic troubles are narrated by Gregory of Tours in a manner which shows that she was superior to the Frankish and Gallo-Roman women among whom her lot was cast; and she is said to have been an affectionate, careful mother.

Those "Merovingian times" were very evil days; as we peruse old Gregory's curiously interesting books, or Thierry's epitome, we feel glad that we do not meet with Bertha's name. We

know she was growing up somewhere, secluded from that wicked world: had she not been thus hidden, she never could have been the blessing that she was to Ethelbert and to England. The "Récit" describes the royal city of Soissons, and the palace of her fathers, and indicates where she is likely to have been; and with these probabilities we must be satisfied.

Charibert died very suddenly in the year 567: according to the date given by Soames, Bertha's marriage must have taken place three years after her father's death, when her uncle Chilperic reigned in Paris, and acted as her guardian[5].

During that interval, and while the union of Ethelbert and Bertha was in contemplation, another marriage occurred in the royal family of France. Sigebert, King of Austrasia, the youngest of Clothaire's sons (therefore one of Bertha's uncles), married Brunehaut, the daughter of a king of the Visigoths who reigned at Toledo. The Visigoths were the least barbarous of the barbarians; the princess was highly educated, and she intensely admired every thing Roman. Strikingly different were the results brought about by those two contemporaneous marriages—that of Sigebert to the strong-willed Brunehaut,—and that of Ethelbert

[5] "Ethelbert ascended his father's throne about the year 560, and probably ten years afterwards married Bertha. Yen considers Ethelbert to have married about the year 570." See "The Anglo-Saxon Church," by Soames, published by Parker.

to the gentle Bertha. As Dr. Hook remarks, "The silence of history is praise."

Brunehaut's character has been put in different lights by historians; but all who have traced out the whole of her course, agree in describing her as gifted with surpassing attractions and talents, which enabled her to commit gigantic crimes. She had received great provocations from the atrocious Fredegonde, and jealousy inflamed revenge. Each of these queens ardently desired to attract all homage to herself, and to hold supreme authority: they were more like the furies of heathen mythology, than like Christian women, as they ought to be.

And yet Brunehaut was very anxious to refine the manners of the Franks: she lost popularity and life itself through her resolute determination on that point. She gave liberally to the Church, and took particular interest in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons; so that Pope Gregory, when writing of the better part of her life, commends her religious zeal.

The barbarous manner in which this proud queen was put to death when upwards of eighty years old, excites our pity, although we know that the vengeance which pursued and overtook her, was not more malicious than that which she had nourished in her own heart[6].

[6] Childebert, the son of Fredegonde, caused Brunehaut to be cruelly insulted, and then tied to the tails of four wild horses, to be torn to pieces.

Radigund wrote to both Chilperic and Sigebert, endeavouring to counteract the mischief wrought by their wives. It is almost the last thing we hear of her; for in those turbulent days she was going down to the grave in peace. She died on the 13th of August, 587

Gregory of Tours writes: "That year died '*La bienheureuse Radégonde;*' this event occasioned the deepest mourning in the monastery which she had founded. I went myself to take part in the funeral solemnities; she was buried three days after death." The bishop found the corpse of his aged friend lying in the open coffin, looking fresh as if she were still in life. Around it stood about two hundred women, bewailing the loss of her whom they called their mother; and no doubt she had been more tender and careful over them than some natural parents had been. Most of them were women of high rank; several were of royal birth; and two were kings' daughters. With every possible mark of respect, the body was conveyed to a church lately completed, but not yet consecrated, which Radigund had erected. The Bishop of Tours conducted the service, and the still open coffin was gently lowered into the grave. When the prayers were ended, alleluias were sung, but the sobbing voices could scarcely raise the psalm of praise.

Radigund had attained her seventy-eighth year: she had been fully aware that her end was approaching, and had written letters to all the Frankish kings, and even to the princes who were

their heirs, to beg that the monastery of the Holy Cross might be protected. She signed these letters "Radégonde, pécheresse," remarking that that was the only title fit for a dying woman. And then she dedicated the convent to St. Martin and St. Hilary, as it was becoming usual for churches and religious houses to bear the names of departed saints, who were supposed to guard them.

Queen Bertha loved the name of St. Radigund, and brought it to Kent. Just outside the North Gate of Canterbury there used to be a bath, or well, which bore her name. It was a fine spring, built over, and fitted for bathing and drinking; there were very ancient foundations there, described by one who saw them about seventy years ago. The unfailing stream flows on; but now we can hardly trace where those earthen vessels may have been which once held the pure water, and were the means of giving refreshment to many.

But we have one beautiful memorial of Radigund, the ruins of a once splendid abbey, not far from Dover. It lies beyond Buckland, up among the hills where wild flowers are so abundant—bright and fresh as those on which Radigund and Fortunatus made verses so long ago—flowers which have delighted the simple-hearted, and cheered the care-worn of every generation.

The broken walls and arches of the monastery, all draped with ivy, are intermingled with the buildings on a large dairy-farm, and with spreading oak-trees, whose years are reckoned by centuries.

But what are the days of a tree, compared with the days of the unbounded sea spread out beneath those hills?

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow:
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now."

Very few of those who ramble among the picturesque fragments of St. Radigund's abbey are acquainted with the story of her whose name it bears, or even know that she was a saint in the Scriptural meaning of the word: an excellent woman, and one who may have had much to do with forming the character of our first Christian queen[7].

[7] The walls now standing are supposed to have been erected at the close of the twelfth century. Possibly they may have been raised on the site of a more ancient building, as was so often done. Be that as it may, the names of St. Martin and St. Radigund were brought to this country by Queen Bertha.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SONS OF THE ASH-TREE.

" When war's terrific voice shall cease,
The glorious combat ended,
We'll shade us in the bowers of peace,
By sacred laws defended :
O'er flowing bowls with patriot pride
Our victories reciting,
We'll shed a tear for those who died
Their country's battles fighting ;
And still our song shall ever be
Old England, home, and liberty."

Old Song.

WE have seen that the kingdom of Kent was conquered by Hengist, and established by his son Eric, surnamed Œscus, or the Ash, because he wore a branch of that tree in his helmet; just as, centuries after, Geoffrey Plantagenet wore the broom plant (Planta Genista) and gave the name to a dynasty. Thus those ancient kings of Kent were all the Ashlings, or "sons of the ash." It was a highly honoured tree, one of those planted in the sacred groves which surrounded the temples of Woden.

The kingdom, as it was first established, extended beyond London, including territory afterwards won by other invading bodies. The second kingdom was founded by Ella who came from Saxony proper by the advice of his friend Hengist. He is often called Ella the Saxon, to distinguish him from Ella the Angle, who came over more than sixty years afterwards, and settled north of the Humber. Hengist and Ella were always on most amicable terms, and Eric maintained the alliance between Kent and Sussex after his father's death.

Ella landed in Sussex with a formidable band of men, and advanced towards Kent. The Britons fled before him, taking refuge in an immense forest which stretched from Hampshire into Sussex and Kent, including the weald of Kent, which Lambard describes as "a vast wood, inhabited not by men, but by deer and hogs." This wild tract of country is said to have extended 120 miles from East to West, and generally about 30 miles from North to South. At the edge of this wilderness, on the borders of Sussex, stood the strongly fortified town of Andrides Ceaster, which had been built by the Romans, and was still one of the most important towns in the island. Here the Britons rallied, and made a stand against the Saxons; but resistance proved in vain. After a protracted siege, Ella took Andrides, destroyed the town, and barbarously massacred the inhabitants. It was never rebuilt, but remained for centuries in that state of ruin which showed how noble a place it had been, and the massive walls of

the ancient city are still seen at Pevensey[1]. Ella the Saxon was the first Bretwalda: the office was not instituted until after the death of Hengist, and he never bore the title, his was only military supremacy. Ella presided over a duarchy, for he died five years before Cerdic founded the third kingdom of Wessex. East Anglia was the fourth, Essex the fifth, Bernicia the sixth, Deira the seventh, and Mercia made an eighth; but afterwards Bernicia and Deira were united into Northumberland, which reduced the number again to seven.

Bernicia, the most northerly state, extended to the Frith of Forth; that kingdom was founded by a celebrated chief who came over with twelve sons—Ida "the war-king of the Angles[2]."

Deira was founded by another body of Angles, headed by Ella or Alla, who took possession of the land southward of the river Tyne. It was an unfruitful district, very scantily peopled,—a heathery moorland country,—so they called it Deira land, the land of wild deer.

Of Alla the Angle we know nothing worthy of record, except that he reigned there for nearly thirty years, and that his name is connected with the well-known incident which occurred in the market-place at Rome. We must recall the anecdote, as the circumstance it relates acquired importance from the consequences which ensued.

[1] Wright.

[2] Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons.

That story takes us far away, to the magnificent city of Rome, sets us down among those grand old buildings, whose hoary ruins are still standing; and what we have seen or heard of them may help us to picture Rome as it existed about thirteen hundred years ago. Those who then wandered among the monuments erected to keep alive the memory of splendid victories or of time-honoured emperors and heroes, must have felt puzzled if the question occurred to them—which of these was the greatest?

The fellow-Christian who is now to be set before us, is one of those child-like beings whose superiority will be fully understood when we take the places assigned to us in the kingdom of heaven—one who, while he sojourned here below, had a humble, though a noble, spirit fettered by a very weak body.

Gregory was the son of Gordian, a wealthy senator, of good birth, whose religious impressions had led him to renounce the world; and who had been for many years one of the seven cardinal deacons who took care of the ecclesiastical districts of Rome. Thus Gregory grew up under good paternal influence and in a good position of life, and he owed much to the tender and judicious affection of his excellent mother, Sylvia. Being amiable and well-informed, he became distinguished among the young patricians of his age, and was a favourite with the Emperor Justin the Younger, who made him Prætor, or chief magis-

trate of Rome, when he was thirty-four years old. But studious habits, weak health, and a devotional turn of mind, all tended to make the magisterial duties, and the pompous state connected with that high office, distasteful to him; he resigned it, therefore, soon after the death of his father, in consequence of which event he had come into possession of very considerable property, chiefly land in the island of Sicily.

Desiring to use his wealth to the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men, he built a monastery on each of his several estates. One of these was in Rome, at the western angle of Mount Cælius, which commanded that part of the city in which the stupendous Coliseum and the Palace of the Cæsars stood, and the Campagna beyond the walls, bounded by the Sabine Hills. It overlooked a spot which had been venerated by the ancient Romans; for they believed that there, under a shady grove, beside a sparkling fountain, the wise and good King Numa held his conferences with the nymph Egeria.

Gregory called his convent St. Andrew's, but it is now known as St. Gregory's. Here he lived for many years, not as the abbot, but as one of the brotherhood of monks. He lived as quietly as his companions, and still more abstemiously; for we must own that, though temperate in all other respects, he fell into an excess of self-denial, forgetting that even our frail bodies belong to God, who has entrusted them to us, that we may give them such care as their infirmities require.

But though Gregory secluded himself from the pleasures and the vanities of the world, yet he did not cut himself off from human sympathies. On the contrary, he was the great philanthropist of his age; he delighted in all works of charity, especially in mission work, which he contrived to carry on by buying young slaves from different countries, and providing for their maintenance and education, while he looked forward to the complete abolition of slavery, and pleaded for it with all the energy and eloquence of his earnest nature, even going so far as to urge the sale of sacred vessels, and of the property of the Church, for the purpose of redeeming slaves.

His favourite recreation was that of all others most calculated to awaken sympathetic feelings of devotion; he had great musical talent, which he applied to the highest purpose. It is to Gregory we owe the chants which bear his name, and which have ever since been the basis of Church music. And he was not above doing the drudgery work; he actually taught the chorister boys, though he was often so much out of health as to be obliged to rest on a couch while he gave the lessons.

That couch, and a book from which he taught, were long preserved in his old home, the Convent of St. Andrew, on the pine-crowned Cælian Hill[3]. Even the rod was shown there with which he chas-

[3] In that convent there is a large picture representing the departure of the forty monks on their mission to the Angles of Britain.

tised refractory pupils; but that cannot have been severely used, for Gregory, like many other great men, was remarkably fond of children, and interested in all that was conducive to their welfare.

We may imagine Gregory to have been somewhere about forty years of age when the incident in the market-place occurred: it was a very simple adventure, quite in keeping with the regular routine of monastic life which he had been leading for years. While taking his daily walk, he noticed that an unusual number of persons were hastening towards one of the Forums which was used as a market-place. On inquiring the cause of this, he was told that a vessel had arrived with a very large cargo of various merchandise.

Gregory followed the multitude, and threaded his way among the bales of goods, looking round on the active, noisy scene. Most likely he looked for slaves, as they generally formed a part of every large cargo from a distant land. The captives were tied together by a rope, and made to stand in an open space, where they were from time to time paraded up and down, to attract the attention of those who passed by.

The iniquitous traffic was chiefly carried on by Jews, who purchased boys from their fathers, or persons of any age and of either sex from masters and creditors. We are told that it was no uncommon thing for parents to sell their children "when they were overstocked."

In Saxon England, as we have seen, a master

could not sell a servant except with the land, but criminal slaves might be sold; and there, and in Rome, and other countries, it was as in Judea—a creditor might sell, not only the debtor, but also his wife and children, to which custom our Saviour alluded in the parable of the "Unmerciful Servant[4]."

But the arrival of slaves from Britain was evidently a novelty in Rome: it seems to have been the first time that Gregory had met with any from our island[5].

They were remarkably different from the dark natives of Africa, Egypt, and Syria, and from the bright black-eyed Greek, whom he had often before seen pacing to and fro, or submitting to the inspection of wealthy Romans who were thinking of purchasing.

Though feeling deeply, Gregory spoke lightly, playing with words, which was his habit. On being told that they were Angles, he remarked, "rightly are they called Angles, for they have the faces of angels, and ought to be fellow-heirs of heaven." Again he asked "What is the name of the province whence they were brought?" He was told they were Deirans, from Deira-land, which lay between two rivers in the north of Britain, and that the land was governed by a king named Alla. "Well again,"

[4] Stanley.

[5] One of the first restrictions on the sale of children fixed an age beyond which they must not be sold. Archbishop Theodore permitted a father, if pressed by necessity, to sell a son under seven years of age, but not older.—*Thrupp.*

Theodore occupied the see from A.D. 668 to A.D. 693.

said Gregory; "rightly are they called Deirans, plucked as they are from God's ire (de irâ Dei), and called to the mercy of Christ." And he added, "We must teach them to sing Hallelujah to One greater than Alla. Hallelujah shall he sung in those parts." That Hebrew word had lately been introduced by Gregory himself into the services of the Christian Church.

The earnest monk did not immediately return to his convent; he felt that he had found work to do in the world, and he was ready to do it with all his might. He went from the Forum to the Vatican, and obtained the permission of Pope Pelagius the Second to go forth with a little band of missionaries to preach the Gospel in Britain. A few brethren of his own convent volunteered to accompany him, and they set out as soon as possible.

They had travelled on for three days, along the great road which led to the Alps, when, while they were resting at noon, and allowing their mules to feed, messengers galloped up on jaded horses, bearing a command from the Pope for Gregory's instant return. He was a great favourite with the people, who seem to have had a notion that some jealous feeling had induced the Pope to permit him to leave the city, and to undertake an enterprise which they considered so fraught with dangers, that they feared they might never see his face again. A furious mob had attacked the Pope when he was on his way to St. Peter's church, demanding that

Gregory should be recalled. He returned to his monastery on the Cælian Hill, and dwelt there quietly while years rolled away.

Such work as he delighted in was being prepared for his ardent mind; but his weak frame was to be spared the trials it must have encountered had he been allowed to proceed to England, which was at that time violently convulsed by the sufferings of war. Paganism was triumphant; for the Saxons had gained upon the creed as they gained upon the country. Not that the ancient British Church was extinct: it still existed in the persons of zealous bishops, clergymen, monks, and gallant chieftains, and in the families of the vanquished race which had migrated westward, or across the sea to Armorica. But the mass of the Celtic population which remained on the land was very ignorant; when fortune forsook these people, their faith failed; and those masters who felt any interest in the opinions of their dependents could generally persuade them that Woden was a powerful god, the kind defender of his followers. Undoubtedly some few must have heard the still small voice, even when the storm was at its worst; but the multitude did not hear, till the whirlwind had passed over, till the din and confusion of war had subsided.

As Kent was the first Saxon kingdom formed, so it was the first to attain to a settled condition; but peace and security were not existing even there, when the monk of St. Andrew's set out on his

projected mission, and returned in disappointment.

We must now go back to that old Kentish dynasty "The Sons of the Ash-tree." Eric had been succeeded by his son Octa, whose reign was short and unfortunate, for he lost all that part of the country which we now call Essex and Middlesex, and which was formed into the kingdom of the East Saxons, by Erchenvin, another Saxon leader. Hermanric, the son and successor of Octa, reigned thirty years; but no record of his deeds has come down to us, and we remember him, not as the king, but as the father of the noblest monarch of that ancient line.

Ethelbert (the Noble and Bright, as his name signifies) was the fourth from Hengist. He gave early promise of superior abilities, which Hermanric seems to have appreciated, as he associated his son in the government of the kingdom when that prince had attained his sixteenth year.

A young Saxon prince loved to be surrounded by a band of companions, whom he attracted by his reputation for valour, hospitality, and open-handedness. They bound themselves to him as friends and servants, anxious to share his dangers, toils, and triumphs. The prince provided them with arms and horses, and divided with them whatever he gained in successful warfare.

In times of peace, these warriors, unless some daring adventure tempted them away, remained by the side of their royal leader, resided with him,

living at his expense, and assisting the females of the household in performing those domestic duties in which they were continually engaged; and when the work of the day was done, all shared its social comforts and pleasures.

Each of this band of retainers undertook some special employment which he preferred, or for which he was most fitted. One was a maraschal, or horse-servant; another a stallere, or stall-man, who looked after the stables; a third took charge of his lord's private apartments, and was called the bower-thane. There was also a hrœgh thane, or clothes servant, a hoarder, or money-box keeper, and many others. Among them, one whose calling marks the barbarity of the times—a private executioner, or headsman.

Menial as were the tasks performed by these young nobles of the Court, they received equally condescending attentions. The queen and the princesses handed the wine-cup to the thanes of the king and the princes, and even attended to their clothes. We read of a king whose thanes became distressingly ragged because he was a widower. At last they mutinied, and, coming to him in a body, insisted on his immediately marrying again, as, while he was without a queen, they had no one to make them new clothes, or even to sew up the rents in their old ones [6].

In those days marriages were almost always

[6] From Thrupp's "Homes of the Saxons."

made early in life. Ethelbert's mother does not appear in history, but that is no reason for supposing that she was the less amiable and useful in her home. His sister Ricula married the king of the recently-formed and then insignificant kingdom of Essex: of her son Sebert we shall hear by and by.

Ceawlin, King of Wessex, was then Bretwalda: he had displayed both courage and resources as a commander, and had gained much experience; having extended his territory, and taken several strongholds from the Celtic Britons. Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, had submitted to him, and he had successfully pursued hostilities along the banks of the Severn; for King Arthur and his gallant knights had passed away with the generation in which they flourished. The sceptre of the Pendragons[7] was broken; and the noblest of them all was sleeping in his deep, narrow bed, concealed alike from friend and foe[8]. Strange rumours were afloat, which grew more and more mysterious; and yet Ceawlin the Saxon triumphed in the West.

But in the East there was a rising power, which was to shine in meridian glory after Ceawlin's sun

[7] Pendragon was the title of a paramount chief who presided over several Celtic kingdoms.

[8] "The death of Arthur was long concealed; and a wild tale was diffused among the people, that he had withdrawn from the world into some magical region, from which at a future crisis he was to re-appear."—*Turner's "Anglo-Saxons."*

had gone down and the day was ended to him. Ethelbert was not without that ambition which naturally belongs to aspiring genius. He perceived with regret that his predecessors had lost both territory and dignity since the days of their progenitor, the Conqueror of Kent. He was determined to redeem the honour of his country—a brave resolution, although his notions of redeeming the past were those of an inexperienced youth and an untutored heathen. Ceawlin's arrogance and aggression must be resisted, the standard of Hengist must be unfurled, that prancing white horse on the field of red[9]. Earls and thanes, the flower of Kent's uncouth nobility, rallied round their fiery young prince; and they went forth to invade Wessex, the rival kingdom which was endeavouring to humble Kent.

But a lad of sixteen was no match for a skilful commander; and so, on the field of Wimbledon, which is memorable as being the spot on which Saxon first contended against Saxon, Ethelbert gained, not a victory, but a salutary lesson. He found that courage alone is insufficient to ensure success, and learned the value of strength and discipline. His ambitious spirit was by no means subdued, it was only checked for a time; and as he grew older, although his admirable qualities were appreciated, and he gained both dominion and power, yet his spirit was continually chafed by the restrictions

[9] The azure field is of later date.

caused by the federal nature of the Anglo-Saxon form of government at that period.

The kings of the Heptarchy had their own ideas about the balance of power; and when the King of Kent had obtained possession of Mercia, they all resolved to unite against him. Ethelbert, fearing the consequences of such a combination, relinquished Mercia to the son of the king whom he had conquered and dethroned; but he felt the disappointment deeply, even though he maintained so high a character and position that, on the death of Ceawlin, he was elected Bretwalda.

The jealousies existing between the Saxon kings, and the suspicions thereby engendered, caused harassing difficulties, which probably induced Ethelbert to open for himself a wider sphere. No doubt his politic mind saw the advantage to be gained by foreign alliance, when he determined on cultivating the friendship of Charibert, who had lately ascended the throne of Paris.

That monarch, as we have seen, was highly educated, and had done much towards the civilization of his country, so far as external refinements were concerned. Yet the Court of Paris was exceedingly dissolute at the time when Ethelbert visited it. But he had come from the purer, though ruder, court of his little kingdom, and Bertha had but lately left her childhood's home: more innocent than most of those by whom they were surrounded, they must have been attracted towards each other.

Ethelbert's admiration for that beautiful and good princess soon grew into a strong affection, which had power to guide him into the ways of peace and holiness. Charibert seems to have favoured his daughter's royal suitor, but a most unexpected shock put a stop to the matter for a time—the sudden death of the King of Paris, which occurred in 567, after he had reigned between five and six years.

The Salic law, which prevents women from inheriting, prevailed among the Franks, who seem to have had altogether less respect than the Saxons for "the spindle side of the family," as King Alfred calls his female relations.

As Charibert left no son, his brothers divided his dominions. The boundaries of the Frankish kingdoms had hitherto been strangely confused, but by this partition they became still more so. Chilperic, the third surviving son of that powerful old king Clothaire, reigned at Paris after his brother's death, and seems to have been the guardian of his niece. He did not approve of her intended marriage to the King of Kent, and objected on the ground that he was a Pagan prince.

Although Radigund's name is not mentioned in connexion with the affair, yet we cannot help suspecting that she had a voice in it; for we are told Chilperic had a sort of superstitious respect for that extraordinary woman, and that he feared to offend her, lest some dire calamity should ensue; and Gregory of Tours relates how the

projected marriage of Basine, Chilperic's own daughter, was prevented by Radigund's interference.

We cannot give Chilperic credit for sincerely entertaining a religious scruple, for Gregory says "one cannot imagine any sin of self-indulgence of which Chilperic was not guilty," and he suffered his wife Fredegonde, a low-born but very clever woman, to lead him on to such wickedness, that the old historian has stigmatized him as "the Herod and Nero of our times." Such a man must have had some very weak points of character. But the weak-minded sometimes take the right course, when they will be guided by those superior to themselves; so Chilperic wisely discountenanced Bertha's marriage, on the plea that the King of Kent was an idolater: "he would not hear a word of the match."

But Ethelbert's regard for the princess was firmly rooted in his heart, and his faith in his false gods was shaken. Opposition did but strengthen his determination, and when conditions were put forward, he readily assented to them. He solemnly promised that Bertha, as Queen of Kent, should have liberty openly to profess the Christian religion and to worship with her attendants, under the care of a Bishop of the Church of Christ.

The less important items of the marriage contract have not come down to us; but we know that the Anglo-Saxon laws included regulations concerning the buying of a wife. We may fairly conclude, therefore, that Ethelbert purchased

matrimonial felicity in the usual manner—unless the French, being more refined in their ideas, had already adopted the modern custom of giving a dower with the bride.

The discoveries which we have made with regard to the origin of wealth, make it appear quite likely that, in either case, Bertha's value may have been estimated as equivalent to that of a certain number of cows; for coins were very scarce in Saxon England before the monks from Rome brought the arts required for coining. We need not suppose that the animals were transmitted across the channel: our friend, the philosophical merchant, may have assisted in making a more convenient pecuniary arrangement. However that may have been, the royal bride, no doubt, received both the paternal parting present and the bridegroom's gift.

The Venerable Bede informs us that the Frankish princess was sent forth with all regal state and honour, attended by a large retinue; and that she had several French priests in her train, "over whom a Bishop named Luidhard presided[1]." The princess may have been one of the lambs of that chief pastor's flock in her early days; for some historians call him Bishop of Soissons, others Bishop of Senlis; from which perhaps we may infer that he was translated from the one to the other of those ancient sees. If so, his removal

[1] Bede says simply "a Bishop named Luidhard."

might have been caused by those political changes which took place on the death of Clothaire and the partition of his dominions.

We can trace Luidhard's course almost as clearly as we can trace Bertha's from the kingdom of Neustria or Soissons to that of Paris, and then on to Kent. And yet we have no positive evidence as regards the antecedent story of either the aged Bishop or the youthful Queen, till that day when they were fellow-travellers, watching the white cliffs of France receding from their sight, and those of England growing into full proportion as they drew near to the unknown land before them.

We may be sure that Queen Bertha was greeted by a hearty welcome; for a people who, even in their rudest primitive condition, were distinguished by the domestic virtues, could not be indifferent to the happiness of a monarch whom they loved and honoured. And Bertha's heart must have yearned towards her husband's heathen subjects; she must have remembered how Clovis, her own great ancestor, and France, her native country, received Christianity through the medium of Clotilda.

Canterbury, then Cantwara-byrig, the royal city of the Kings of Kent, is one of the most ancient cities of Britain. The river on which the city stood was called the Dour by the ancient Britons, and it retained that Celtic name until the Saxons slightly changed it to Stour.

The coast of Kent and the river of Canterbury

have greatly altered since Queen Bertha's times. Ships from Germany and France usually cast anchor in Sandwich harbour, and those which were going on to London passed through that large haven, and thence through the wide estuary of the Stour, coming out to sea again at Reculver, and not rounding the Isle of Thanet, by which course a considerable angle was cut off. At either end of that broad estuary, the Romans had built a strong fortress; they were called Portus Rutupiæ, Rutupian Ports, and the shore along the estuary between them was the Rutupian shore[2]. But, to distinguish one fort from the other, that near Reculver was generally called Regulbium, while the name Rutupiæ clung especially to the castle near Sandwich, which, being kept up as a royal Saxon residence, retained much of its Roman strength and magnificence. It was sometimes called Riesburg, or the King's Castle, which changed to Richborough; or this modern name may be simply ascribable to the riches found there —Roman coins and other valuable curiosities[3].

The ocean ebbed and flowed close up to the walls of this grand old castle; indeed, a great deal of land which is now cultivated, was then under water; and the branch of the Stour on which

[2] Hence the *plural* name, Rutupiæ; but it is variously spelt by different authors.—*Planché.*

[3] "Saxon coins have been found there from the earliest times down to some of the ninth century, which proves the continuous occupation of the site to that period."—*Ibid.*

Canterbury stands, was several miles shorter than it now is, for it had not so far to run before it reached the sea, which flowed over much of what is now called the valley of the Stour. One of the oldest descriptions extant tells us that the broad river rushed into Canterbury through arches in the city wall, entering near the western gate.

The palace of the kings of Kent was pillaged and burnt by the Danes, therefore not a trace of it remains. Indeed, there are only two buildings at Canterbury which belong to Queen Bertha's times, in which some of the stones and bricks she looked upon are still preserved. Those buildings were both originally Christian churches, raised when Britain was a Roman province: they stood outside the city walls, scarcely a quarter of a mile from each other. The one nearest to the city had been used as a sort of pagan chapel royal by the kings of Kent, who had most likely planted trees around it, according to their custom. The other, which had remained a deserted, but not a desecrated church, was repaired for Queen Bertha's use. The two places of worship,—that in which Ethelbert bent the knee to idols, and that in which Queen Bertha prayed for his conversion and witnessed his baptism,—were neither of them far from the palace, if it stood, as is supposed, in the eastern part of Canterbury; and those two buildings still link that day with this.

We have no reason to suppose that the palace

was other than a genuine Saxon residence, constructed chiefly of timber, and built in that compound style peculiar to the period. Certainly the Ashlings had there maintained not only regal state according to the somewhat rude fashion of the age, but also their political, social, and domestic customs. There was the hall in which councillors assembled for grave debates, and in which the king received all who desired to speak with him; the hall where the hospitable board was reared, and surrounded with jovial guests, where the merry pipe and harp were heard, where the dancers danced with all their might, where the wandering gleemen gave and received entertainment. And there were the bowers where the spinsters tramped the wheel, and did all sorts of useful work; and the queen's bower, for cheerful conversation and amusement, where the same light fingers that skilfully touched the lute, sent "the flying shuttle through the dancing strings." There were the gardens, in which the ladies of those early days took great pleasure, as several of the old pictures show, and many of the names which they gave to their flowers have come down to us.

We imagine the queen to have been much more educated than the Saxon ladies of her court, who could have had but slender means for cultivating their minds previously to her arrival. Their beechen books were thin tablets of beech-wood, in which the runic characters were cut: that wood, being soft, was suited to the purpose. These rude literary

productions were scarce, yet the want of books could not have been generally felt, when very few persons could read. But among the unlettered men and women of that generation, there were doubtless those who, in their less exalted spheres, attained as clear and sound a judgment, and exercised as much good common sense, as we see in the King of Kent. Nature, and the world we live in, are not altogether dull and incompetent teachers to those who watch events and operations, and receive suggestions thoughtfully.

Luidhard and Bertha must have brought parchments from the Continent; but twenty years after they came, manuscripts were very rare and valuable. We read so easily, that the question seldom occurs to us—

> "Whence did the wondrous mystic art arise
> Of painting speech, and speaking to the eyes?
> That we, by tracing magic lines, are taught
> How both to colour and embody thought."

We cannot realize the condition of those so differently circumstanced from ourselves in this respect, and therefore we often misjudge them: we are foolishly astonished at both the wisdom and the folly which we find in the writings of those early Christian centuries. Wading through that close writing, must have been any thing but a light task. Perhaps it gave some relaxation to the mind, to rest awhile and puzzle over the curious illuminations, often allegorical, and all executed by hand in the monasteries.

Even we, who bask in the light of the nineteenth century, owe a debt of gratitude to those indefatigable students and scribes. What should we know about the middle ages, if they had not worked so diligently?

We are now tracing out a period of English history which was first narrated by Bede, the illustrious monk of Jarrow, little more than a century after the principal events connected with it had occurred. But to Gregory of Tours we refer as to an eye-witness of some of the events which he recorded. He, Gregory the Great, Columba, and others, were actually writing works which we may still read—works from which later historians have drawn their information. But the series of books which compose these old standard works must have been slowly completed; and during an author's life-time copies must have been obtained with difficulty even by Royal readers. If Bertha had received her education at Ste. Croix under Queen Radigund's superintendence, she may have been capable of reading from ancient Greek and Latin authors: we remember that her father prided himself on his classical attainments. As regards the literature of our own country, there must have been a blank separating the Celtic from the Anglo-Saxon. The Celtic manuscripts, which contained (as modern writers tell us) rich gems of thought and a superabundance of beautiful similes, had been conveyed by the fugitive Britons to the great monastery at Bangor and to smaller religious houses,

where they were jealously guarded by the monks. The first English poet, and the first English historian, arose in the two succeeding generations. The real name of the former has not come down to us. We call him Caedmon, for so the monks of Whitby called the countryman who told them his strange dream, and who was persuaded by them to leave the plough and the herdsman's spear in the hands of the less gifted, that he might devote his talent to the glory of God. Being in the habit of studying the Chaldee Scriptures, they gave their poet a Chaldean name which signified "In the Beginning," because he sang of the Creation, and of other events related in the book of Genesis. Caedmon could not read, but he listened to the sacred stories and then turned them into Saxon verse. King Alfred tells us that what Caedmon heard read he could after a little space adorn with the greatest sweetness and feeling; and by his song the minds of men were often inflamed with contempt for the world, and with desire of heavenly life. His song and his verse were so winsome to hear that his teachers themselves wrote and learned from his mouth[4].

Yet Caedmon understood nothing about rhyme and the rules of metre; his verse was distinguished from prose only by a regular alliteration, being so managed that the emphatic words in each line began with the same letter, which was also

[4] From "Some Account of Caedmon, from Beda's Ecclesiastical History, with King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Translation."

the initial of the first word on which the stress of voice fell in the second line, so that a kind of couplet was formed.

These compositions delighted all classes of people; therefore we may suppose they were read by the children of Ethelbert and Bertha.

That king and queen became the parents of a son named Eadbald, and two daughters Ethelburga and Eadba. Ethelburga is repeatedly mentioned; we can trace her from the cradle to the grave, and all we hear of her reminds us that she was Bertha's daughter.

The pet name of Tata, "the lively," given to her in childhood, clung to her through life. It was customary to prefix, or add to the Christian name, another name indicating some personal peculiarity, or quality; and the custom may have been useful before the introduction of surnames.

There is reason to suppose that Rutupiæ, now Richborough, was the marine residence of the kings of Kent. The castle had been erected on a little peninsula formed by the two outlets at the mouth of the Stour, where it discharged itself into the ocean; the waves which ran almost round the edifice, and often dashed up to the walls, were very turbulent; hence the name Rutupiæ, from *rutubari* and *rutuba*, old Latin words which signified perturbation of the waters[5].

The castle was walled on three sides, but open on

5 "A Corner of Kent," by Planché.

the fourth side nearest the sea. There were two square towers in each side wall, and strong solid round towers protected the corners of the immense building, which was almost as large as the Tower of London, high, and well embattled. The chief entrance, in the middle of the western wall, was raised on a platform of large stones; it was a decuman gate, that is, one wide enough for ten men to pass through abreast. A peculiarly well-protected postern-gate admitted through the north-eastern wall, behind which a broad sloping road ascended from the beach, up to the citadel, which must have been adorned with handsome buildings, if we may judge by the masses of white marble that have been scattered about.

The town lay behind the citadel, spread over a gentle declivity. We have no means of ascertaining the state in which that old Roman city was existing in Ethelbert's time; but it seems scarcely possible that the city mentioned by Ptolemy as one of the three chief cities of Cantium (Kent), and which historians of the middle ages tell us was more important during the Roman period than either Durovernum or Londinium, could have been abandoned and reduced to ruins before the close of the sixth century. We know that the Saxons used the Roman roads, and that the traveller might still pursue his journey from Rutupiæ to London along the Watling Street[6]. We

[6] "The Anglo-Saxons adopted the Roman roads and bridges in every part of the island. To the former they gave the name of Streets, a word derived from the Latin 'strata,'

know that the castle of Rutupiæ was still in a habitable state, and that it was commonly called "the King's Castle;" we may therefore imagine our heroine, and those belonging to her, occupying the pleasantest apartments in that large castellated fortress, which may often have sent their thoughts rambling through the long corridor of time, as ours are now doing. They may have been more certain than we can be, that the first stone of that castle was laid by Vespasian, and that it was finished by Severus.

We can call up the prospect which they obtained from those battlements. As they looked eastward, the wide blue ocean was before them. Over bright Pegwell Bay the view was bounded by that sharp chalk promontory, so conspicuous when the sun shines on it, which then towered above a Roman port [7]. On the opposite side of the bay, inclining southward, lay the large haven and the important

by which probably they heard them designated among the Roman population. The great Roman military roads resolved themselves into a few grand lines, which traversed the island in different directions. Perhaps the most important of these was that which ran from Richborough or Dover, through Canterbury and London, across the island to Chester. The Saxons, who planted their local traditions wherever they settled, connected this wonderful work with one of their own mythical traditions, and called it Waetling Straet, the road of the sons of Waetla."—"*Celt, Roman, and Saxon,*" *by Wright.*

Some of the Roman roads still form the basis of principal roads in modern England.

[7] "A Roman port seems to have occupied the site of the modern harbour of Ramsgate."—*Ibid.*

town of Sandwich, so near to them that the ships and the buildings were distinctly seen. Stonar, upon the beach on the Thanet side of Sandwich, near the famous oyster-beds, was also a considerable town. Still following the sun's track, looking inland, they saw that which reminded the king of his forefathers, and of the northern land whence they had come; for there, upon rising ground, at a distance convenient to the inhabitants of Sandwich, Stonar, and Rutupiæ, stood a grove of trees, then in full vigour, for Ethelbert was the third from Eric, who most likely planted them round one of the largest heathen temples ever erected in our island [8]. And further on, where the sun goes down and is out of our sight, till it rises in glory on the morrow, they could just discern the cemetery where the Sons of the Ash-tree were laid low, with the weapons and ornaments which survive as witnesses to the historical fact that a large and wealthy community lived and died in that neighbourhood before the conversion of the Saxons.

When the Court was at Rutupiæ, they had the opportunity of enjoying one amusement which they may not have provided for in Canterbury.

The Roman Emperors had erected a large amphitheatre outside the castle walls, for gladiatorial and other exhibitions. It was built more substantially than many of the amphitheatres of the

[8] The site of Woden's temple is now occupied by a very pretty country churchyard, with its little church, belonging to the parish of Wodensborough.

Romans. They often merely cut the ground and surrounded it by an embankment of the earth thrown up; but that at Rutupiæ was entirely surrounded by strong walls.

During the Saxon period those ancient amphitheatres were used for comparatively innocent exhibitions. Games with animals succeeded to the inhuman combats in which the Romans had delighted. Wonderful feats of agility were performed, or men danced to the music of the double pipe, an instrument which was afterwards transformed into the bagpipe, by the addition of a bag, or bellows. It was upon these arenas that dancing bears, and dancing dogs, gained a popularity which they long retained. The performances attracted dense crowds of spectators, who occupied the semicircular embankment, whence they looked down on the exhibition, clapping their hands and shouting with Anglo-Saxon energy[9].

Now that spot is peculiarly silent; even the murmur of the waves is no longer heard, for the ocean has receded so far, that Richborough is about two miles from the shore; but there are the strong grey walls, which have stood their ground through the changes of eighteen centuries. And no wonder they have stood; they are from ten to twelve feet in thickness, and the courses of tiles and stones are cemented by a mortar strengthened by shell and small pebbles. The long north wall

[9] Wright's "Domestic Manners."

is almost unbroken; perhaps the twisted trunks, and broad masses of ivy, give as much support as they receive.

The town of Dover first existed as the Roman Dubræ. It is not often mentioned by our earliest historians, because Rutupiæ was the more usual port in landing from France. But when Ethelbert ascended the throne, Dover Castle must have crowned the height on which it still maintains pre-eminence, but not in its present magnitude; for notwithstanding the natural advantage of its position, which renders it almost inaccessible to an enemy, yet each succeeding age has added some military construction to render the important fortress impregnable.

It is said that some sort of fortification stood there when Cantium (Kent) was ruled by four kings, who first contended unsuccessfully against Cæsar, and then accepted his protection against Cassivelaunus, the ambitious Celtic usurper, who was himself crushed by a more powerful invader. But of the existence of the castle at that time, we have no substantial evidence. Roman masonry speaks for itself, and tells us that strong walls and towers were raised at Dover while Britain was under the rule of the Iron Empire. The Romans erected the watch-tower, or pharos, part of which is still standing, and another exactly like it on the Western Heights.

In Ethelbert's time they were efficient light-houses, though their glimmering lights shone less

clearly than those which now guide the mariner. But if light had not been ~~as it is~~ held up through dark times by imperfect instruments, what light would now cheer those in peril, and help them to steer their course?

Near the pharos stood an abandoned and dilapidated church, which is supposed by some to have been erected in the second century; when British hostages and captives, who had left their country in deep depression, came back with joy to their relations and homes, bearing the good news of Salvation which they had heard from the primitive Christians in Rome. Certainly the first congregation which assembled in that little church, had derived faith and knowledge through those Roman Christians who lived so hopefully and fell asleep so happily, those whose names are graven on the stones in the Catacombs marked by the palm-branch and that brief "M. A. R.," or by a few words full of meaning, not to tell of cruelty, of suffering, and of sadness—that is all forgotten: the sleep is sweet, the waking will be joyful. He who explores those hidden chambers, holding up his torch to read the short inscriptions, is not wandering through dark labyrinths of thought; he is feeling more forcibly than he ever felt before, how powerless are all the powers of darkness, because our God is Light[1].

[1] "The early Christians carefully avoided expressing ideas of pain and suffering: the Mediæval Church seems to have thought of little else. The one class of pictures speaks of

The same truth is strikingly presented to us in very different scenes; whether we grope among the subterranean tombs beneath the ruins of ancient Rome, or whether we climb the grassy heights of Dover on some glorious summer's day, looking round on the bright crested ocean, inspirited by the freshening breeze and the expansive prospect; for there,—"close by a relic of Imperial Rome, stands one primitive mark of a Spiritual Empire destined to supplant that of every temporal power[2]." We are told that the date of the church is "all but demonstrably proved" by comparing it with its neighbour the Pharos. The two buildings have been carefully examined, and the basement of the Pharos is pronounced to be genuine Roman work, exhibiting the regular courses of rich red tiles and the salmon-colour mortar, tinged by an admixture of the pounded brick. The church appears to be a work of Roman British art, as it is inferior to the purely Roman but superior to any remains of early Saxon times—curiously blending the faults of a ruder age with the conceptions of one higher and better, which is exactly what we might expect as the result of British feeling and labour before the

peace—the vintage, the feast, the ever-youthful Good Shepherd; the other, setting aside this pleasant ideal, represents agonies with the most painful correctness." See "Early Christian Haunts in the Catacombs," by H. H., "Sunday at Home."

[2] The Rev. J. Puckle.

instructions and examples of Roman builders had died out of this their island colony [3].

Natural genius, inherent in the Celt, made him no dull recipient of his master's lessons, as we—even at this distance of time—may perceive by the architectural fragments of his handywork. Perhaps no better example of this could be instanced than the brick arch, forming the head-way of a high narrow entrance in the south wall of the nave of that old church, which, both as to material and construction, very nearly resembles the Roman. "All the signs are like so many concurrent voices for the Castle Church having been the work of British Christians, about the ceasing of their great persecution. The historical character of that time, as given by Bede, throws a colour of greater probability on such having been the time when a church like this might most likely have been built on a site of strength and security like the Roman entrenchments at Dover. Bede speaks thankfully of the dying out of the persecution, of the Christians being liberated from fear of violence and death, able once more to teach and worship in open day; he notes the glad zeal with which they hastened to profit by the peace and order of the times. He speaks of their now being able to recover and restore the churches that had been ruined, and often levelled with the ground. He

[3] "Church and Fortress of Dover Castle," by the Rev. J. Puckle.

particularly records the fact that this was the time when they reared temples in honour of their sacred martyrs' memory, when they distinctly founded them as memorials, built them, and completed them to the best of their power, while the knowledge of these noble lives and deaths were still fresh in many minds and hearts around them. See Bede, Book I., chap. 8[4]."

Thus we see that before Queen Bertha's times the ancient British Church had passed gloriously through the fiery trial of the Diocletian persecution; and it was then strongly contending against the paganism of the Saxons—retreating, but maintaining faith and courage. That was a time of tribulation, in the original meaning of the word—a threshing-time, when the wheat was separated from the chaff[5]. Although the most ignorant portion of the Celtic population had clung to the soil rather than to honour and religion, yet thousands of nobler spirits had held fast the truth when they could hold nothing else. Abandoning their homes and their cherished places of worship, they had fled far away. The pastors had retreated with the flocks, and

[4] From "The Church and Fortress of Dover Castle," by the Rev. J. Puckle.

[5] "The word tribulation is derived from the Latin "tribulum," which was the threshing instrument, or roller, whereby the Roman husbandmen separated the corn from the husks; and "tribulatio," in its primary significance, was the act of this separation."—*Trench*, "*On the Study of Words.*"

at last they had rested in strongholds fortified and entrenched by the Creator's skill. And they were building other churches, vestiges of which have been found among the mountains of Wales, or beneath the hills of drifted sand in Cornwall. Surely a special Providence has guarded those ruins, that they may illustrate the history of the Early Church!

The battered walls at Dover, which bore the form of the Redeemer's Cross when the land was polluted with idolatry, must have touched the heart of the Christian Queen of Kent; she must have grieved over the deserted house of God. Her thoughts about it must sometimes have been spoken to her children, and her words may have been "cast like bread upon the waters" to be "found after many days," when her son Eadbald restored that church, liberally endowed it, and built houses for the appointed canons.

And maternal influence, judiciously exercised over the self-willed boy, a true son of the wild Ash-tree, and over the attractive girl, so full of life and merriment, must have done much towards cementing that strong affection for which the brother and sister became remarkable when Tata Ethelburga's bright spirit was subdued, when she craved, not for excitement, but for rest and peace, and was sheltered and comforted by Eadbald.

But we must not anticipate events; we must for the present leave those children fearless of future sorrow, and their parents enjoying the happy years of early married life, while the favoured land,

relieved from the miseries of war, and governed by a conscientious ruler, was abundantly fruitful, and uncommonly quiet and orderly for those semi-barbarous times.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

"One family, we dwell in love,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

"One army of the living God,
To His commands we bow;
Part of His host have cross'd the flood,
And part are crossing now."

ON a hill beyond Canterbury, towards Sandwich and Rutupiæ, stood that little church which had been restored for the queen's use.

It must have been then, as now, a pleasing object, beautifully situated, commanding a prospect always charming, though its loveliness is now enhanced by the historical associations of successive ages, which began to gather round the hill and in the valley when Queen Bertha came to Canterbury.

From the layers of Roman brick still visible, the church is supposed to have been erected during the Roman period. Masons and carpenters had

been set to work in anticipation of the queen's arrival; the ruin had been repaired and furnished, and the little flock of Christ, folded in the wilderness, dwelling in this heathen land, assembled there.

The Saxon folks (as they called themselves) preferred meeting together where they could still hear of Woden and Fria, and their offspring the lesser divinities, and of the genii who possessed power to injure or to bless, and who interfered in all the affairs of men, even in the least important.

Heindal was the giver of showers, the guardian of the rainbow; and there were spirits who presided over the winds. Eostre controlled the east wind: her festival occurred in the spring, when that wind prevails. It seems strange that the memory of one of our ancestors' idols should be perpetuated by the name of our great Christian festival. Their festival of Yule corresponded with our Christmas; and the blaze of merry England's Yule log blended well with the better light which showed the manger and the shepherds of Bethlehem, blended as the dawn blends with the sunbeams of the morning. It was the break of dawn even then; for, as they stood in those temples, surrounded by their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, they heard of a day when Woden would be no more, when even he would expire in a general conflagration, in which the universe and all its inhabitants, human and spiritual, would pass away. But from this second chaos, a new world would

emerge in surpassing loveliness and grandeur, with a heaven more glorious than Valhalla, and, over all, a God pre-eminent and alone, possessed of still greater might and nobler attributes than Woden. Then the human race must be finally tried, when higher virtues than bravery, and heavier guilt than cowardice, will form the standard of good and evil—when men must be judged according to their doings, and sentenced to eternal punishment or eternal reward, under the reign of Him who is Eternal [1].

They made no idol to represent that Supreme Being, they gave Him no name, they spoke of Him only by mentioning His attributes, generally choosing His most endearing quality, "The Good."

Gradually some of those Saxons of Canterbury were led to see that this God of gods, and Lord of lords, was the Deity worshipped in the little church outside the city—the God of their amiable queen, and of kind Bishop Luidhard, who was her almoner.

Yes, Bertha was as the morning star, shining brightly at that break of dawn.

The queen dedicated her church to St. Martin. Perhaps on the day of consecration he was called in her language "*le bien heureux*," that is the expression which Gregory of Tours most frequently uses when mentioning the blessed dead. At that

[1] This description is drawn from the "Pictorial History," where we find the religion of Oden, or Woden, compared with that of Mahomet.

time the title of Saint was given by courtesy to those who distinguished themselves by studying the history and doctrines of the Church. As we call judges and barristers learned gentlemen, so they called theologians saints; but there was as yet no such thing as canonization [2].

For twenty-six years Queen Bertha's gentle influence was working in the heart of her husband, spreading through the Court and through the kingdom, reaching forwards far on into the undeveloped future, as she performed the duties of a Christian mother [3].

Yet the way could not always have been plain and smooth before her, living as she was in a heathen country, the wife of an unconverted man. And the princes of those days were imperious lords, men whose passions were not subdued and softened by those refinements which must in some degree smooth down inequalities of temper and control hasty ebullitions. Our conceptions of the daily trials of women so differently circumstanced from ourselves, must be very imperfect; yet those bright examples have not lost their virtue; they may help us more perfectly to understand that short parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."

Ethelbert was naturally gifted with a generous

[2] See note on Canonization in the Appendix.

[3] According to date given by Soames. See note in the Appendix.

disposition, a good understanding, and other noble qualities. Fuller says, "he was a wild olive, a good stock fit to be grafted on; yea, he was already, with King Agrippa, though not in the same sense, 'almost a Christian.'" And he was a good king, willing to rule constitutionally by the advice of his counsellors, anxious to improve the laws and the condition of his people.

The years which succeeded that of his marriage were very prosperous. Kent enjoyed a season of tranquillity, was strengthening herself, and was making some slow progress towards the attainment of the arts of peace, while war was raging round her borders—Sussex fighting against Wessex, and Ethelfred, the savage hero of Bernicia, ravaging the northern and western countries as far as the Trent and the Dee, all along the banks of those rivers.

We have seen that the Franks were admitted into the Christian Church when they were in a perfectly barbarous state: Clovis was a mighty barbarian chief. Most of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were brought in, three or four generations later, in a half-civilized state.

Kent, the first established, was also the first christianized, kingdom of the Heptarchy; and it was with this little corner of England, as with the wide world itself. The Saviour came in great humility to a small remote province of the world's great Empire, when the temple of Janus was closed in token of universal peace; and thus also

the knowledge of salvation through that Saviour was brought to our ancestors in an interval of peace. Surely this reflection should induce us to do all we can towards giving that blessing to those whom we are desiring to lead into the fold of Christ.

Ethelbert's alliance with France had strengthened him politically, and enabled him to maintain superiority over the other princes of the Heptarchy; but there was very little intercourse with other nations. Our ships were not yet "swift-winged messengers," and the Isles of the West were thought very far from the rest of the world; and so, in the busy city of Rome very little was known about us. But there was one there who had not forgotten the Angles of Britain.

Gregory had been lately elevated to the bishopric of Rome, much against his own desire; and, indeed, the responsibilities of that position were overwhelming. His predecessor, Pelagius II., had died of a pestilence which was still raging; and the savage Lombards were threatening to attack the city; there were dissensions also in the Church, which must have been more perplexing than mere worldly troubles[4]. Yet all these anxieties had not blotted out the recollection of that sight which had touched Gregory's heart years ago. His purpose was unshaken by the changes passing around him—firm and high as the statue of his favourite Trajan, which looked down on him from the summit of a lofty column in the Forum.

[4] Hook.

Gregory sent out the Benedictine monks in the sixth year of his pontificate, but began to select them two years earlier.

Dr. Hook considers that, in choosing the missionaries whom he was intending to send to Britain, Gregory was guilty of an error in judgment, because, while all history speaks of the fervent piety, the self-denial, and consistent moral conduct of those forty Benedictines who came from Rome, we do not discover among them a single man endowed with superior powers of mind; and we find them, in consequence, wanting in moral courage. Scriptural knowledge was the only knowledge which Gregory valued; and while the success of his missionaries is to be attributed to their being men mighty in the Scriptures, their failures may be traced to that want of general information which is especially observable in the history of Augustine[5]. The monks were taken from different convents; Augustine was the prior of St. Andrew's, which Gregory had founded, and in which he had so long resided. Several were from that monastery.

While Gregory was organizing the mission, and while the monks were preparing to quit their country and their friends, making ready for the long journey, hurrying through the streets of the great city,—still in that Roman world, though not of it,—there was also preparation for departure in the far West. On those mission stations which will never

5 "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

be forgotten though the churches and clusters of cells were made of nothing stronger than hurdle-work and timber, there, in the little island of Iona, a sad parting was in prospect. Columba had been visited with a severe sickness which brought him very near death: such at least may be supposed to be the moral of his alleged declaration concerning the angels who were sent to conduct his soul to paradise. He lingered, however, for some time in patient weakness: being too infirm to walk, he was driven about the island in an agricultural car drawn by an old grey horse; and he was able to pursue quiet occupations, and to join in congregational worship. The last literary work in which he engaged, was in translating the Psalter. He got as far as the thirty-third Psalm, and then he said "Baithen must do the rest." Baithen was a sort of steward, afterwards Abbot of Iona.

Columba had fulfilled the three-score years and ten; for it was about thirty years since he and his twelve companions crossed the sea in the rude Irish currachs, and landed at Hy, as the island was called, and he was then in his forty-second year. "Tall, handsome, and vigorous-looking, his appearance was as prepossessing as his dignified yet cordial manner and his peculiarly pleasing tone of voice[6]."

His natural impetuosity must occasionally have been perceptible, notwithstanding the great change

[6] Montalembert.

which real conversion had wrought, transforming the hot-tempered, vindictive Celtic chief into a consistent disciple of the Prince of Peace, making him worthy of his new name by conforming his disposition to that of the gentle dove, the divinely-chosen symbol of the Holy Spirit, who condescends to be in fellowship with man.

Then Columba went forth to bear, not the avenging sword, but the Word of God, eager to make it known to the heathen islanders and mountaineers. But the idea that he strove to be instrumental in saving the same number of souls as his weapon had sent out of this world, seems to have originated in the minds of his biographers who wrote in later ages; for if Adamnan were acquainted with that legend, he rejected it as not sufficiently authenticated: he does not thus account for the indefatigable missionary zeal of the venerated abbot whose memory was so dear to the brethren of Iona.

When Columba first established a monastery in that island, the Scots were Christians, if only in name; but the Picts were in utter darkness, hence their conversion was the great object of missionary exertion. The enterprising missionary explored the wild tracts to the north of the Grampians, visited Brude, the Pictish king, in his strong fortress northward of Inverness, and preached salvation to the wild natives of the Hebrides[7].

7 Adamnan and Montalembert.

The long boat, manned by missionary monks, was skilfully steered among those craggy islets—was borne upon the rolling sea, between the mountain of dark heath and the mountain of barren stone; and the verdant slope enlivened by a few black cattle and sheep. Perhaps no part of Britain is less altered since Columba's days than that northern Archipelago.

Sometimes the currach must have ridden over the crested waves that broke against the rocks of uninhabited Staffa, or buried themselves in its resounding cavern, which then echoed only the roaring and moaning of imprisoned waters. Little did those mariners in monastic rule suspect that there one of nature's greatest wonders would be found. But they discovered the almost inaccessible island of St. Kilda, more than forty miles westward of Long Island, and reached Iceland, where they built a church, which was afterwards called St. Columba's. Great was the energy and the perseverance of those sea-faring monks, who finally crushed the power of the Druids in the last refuges of Celtic paganism[8].

And the heroes of Iona did not neglect to bear the Gospel to their national enemies. They ventured through ravaged districts in the North and West of England, where the Saxons were subjugating the Celts, or whence they were driving them away. They threw the precious seed of the

[8] Montalembert. See note in Appendix, on Fingal's Cave.

Word broadcast over the desolated land. After a time, the sun broke through the clouds, and the green blade appeared; and long after the death of the great Celtic saint an abundant harvest was gathered where he and his followers had laboured. That reaping-time was not yet come, but Columba's work was done, and he was waiting for the angels[9].

We have full descriptions of the last scenes of his life, written by Adamnan, a Celtic monk; it is as touchingly beautiful a narrative as is to be met with in the whole range of ancient biography[1]. Adamnan drew his materials from curious old manuscripts, composed by those who had been the companions and friends of Columcille, "the Dove of the Cell," as they liked to call him. His last farewells were chronicled with affectionate pathos, his last look over Iona from the highest point in the island, even the last caresses given to the old grey horse, which seemed to have some notion that he was taking leave of his master. But the end did not come as soon as he expected—he waited for the summons.

[9] "The success of the Celtic missionaries, though often overlooked, is as remarkable as it is praiseworthy. The northern half of Anglo-Saxon Britain was indebted for its conversion to Christianity, not to Augustine and the Italian missionaries, but to the Celtic missionaries who passed through Bernicia and Deira into East Anglia, Mercia, and even Wessex."—*Hook.*

[1] Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba," published by the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society, 1857.

The time of preparation for any great change is always a prayerful time to the Christian; he prays, not for himself alone, but also for those whom he is leaving, and for a blessing on the work which has been his, and which must devolve on others. These rills of prayer, springing from the hearts of British and Italian missionaries, from different men in different lands, flowing heavenward to one God, the Author and Finisher of one faith, met in one petition—a prayer that the Church of Christ might be firmly planted, might spread and prosper in our British Islands.

An answer was given to those missionaries in a remarkable manner, as we shall see; but they did not perceive its full meaning, though that was "a generation that sought after signs."

It was early in the summer of 596, that Pope Gregory sent forth the band of missionaries with prayer and benediction. They were to make their way to the northern frontier of Italy, to cross the Gallic Alps, and to rest awhile at the celebrated abbey of Lerins, founded by Egyptian monks, on a beautiful island of the Mediterranean, not far from Toulon. Gregory's thoughts followed them anxiously; and he was beginning to hope that they were drawing near to their destination, when he was unpleasantly surprised by the return of their leader.

Augustine had come back to inform the bishop that they had heard such alarming accounts of the

state of Britain, that, on arriving at Aix in Provence, they thought it right to stop there, and to represent to him the dangers which must be attendant on such an enterprise, and the very little probability of succeeding among so barbarous a people as the Anglo-Saxons, "a nation of wild beasts, thirsting for innocent blood,—a race whom it was impossible to approach or conciliate[3]."

Gregory was gifted with faith and energy which fitted him for the pastoral office: he encouraged Augustine, and sent him back to his companions with the following sensible letter:—

"*Gregory, the Servant of the Servants of God, to the Servants of our Lord.*

"Forasmuch as it were better not to begin a good work, than to think of desisting from that which has been begun, it behoves you, my beloved sons, to accomplish the good work which, by the help of our Lord, you have undertaken. Let not, therefore, the toil of the journey nor the tongues of evil-speaking men deter you; but with all possible earnestness and zeal, perform that which by God's direction you have undertaken, being assured that much labour is followed by greater eternal reward. When Augustine, your provost, returns (whom we have also constituted your abbot), humbly obey him in all things, knowing

[3] "Monks of the West."

that whatsoever ye shall do by his direction, will in all respects be profitable to your souls. May Almighty God protect you with His grace, and grant that in the heavenly country I may see the fruits of your labour, inasmuch as, though I cannot toil with you, I may partake in the joy of the reward, because I am willing to labour. God keep you in safety, my beloved sons.

"Dated the 10th of the Kalends of August (23rd of July, 596)."

But Gregory was considerate as well as firm: he provided Augustine with letters to the kings of France through whose dominions they must pass, and also to other persons of distinction who might help them on their way, and directed that they should procure interpreters acquainted with the Anglo-Saxon language[4].

Augustine rejoined the monks, and they immediately set forward; they went up the Rhone and down the Loire, and performed many a tedious day's journey on foot, protected by the princes and bishops to whom the Pope had recommended them. They stayed some days at Arles, a fine old city near the mouth of the Rhone, which had been the metropolis of Roman Gaul. Constantine the Great erected a palace there; the fragment of a tower is still remaining[5].

[4] "Lives of the Archbishops."

[5] In the year 314, when Constantine the Great was on the Imperial throne, a council of the Church was held at Arles: three British bishops were present.

Gregory had written urgently to Virgilius, Bishop of Arles, on behalf of the missionaries; he had also written to Queen Brunehaut, who responded by hospitably entertaining the travellers.

But the lower orders of people repeatedly insulted the harmless monks as they walked together in the most orderly way, and as they rested at night, having no shelter but such as rocks and trees afforded. The ignorant, brutal peasants of Anjou seemed to look upon them as were-wolves, and assailed them with hooting, yelling, and abusive words[6]. Foot-sore and wearied in mind and body, that patient, persevering band of Christian brethren at last arrived at the sea-coast: the prospect of the voyage seemed refreshing; and as the vessel which was to bear them over the ocean bounded away from the shore, their preacher cheered them by repeating the words of our Lord. "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life[7]."

They landed at Ebbs Fleet, in the Isle of Thanet. The sea has retreated so far from that coast, that a fertile farm now occupies the spot on which those two landings took place which gave us our English forefathers and our English Christianity[8].

[6] Montalembert's "Monks of the West."

[7] Matt. xix. 29. "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

[8] The ancient sea-port town of Ebbs Fleet, which stood

The missionaries must have heard, as they passed through France, that the Queen of Kent was a Christian, and that news must have made them more hopeful. As soon as they had landed, Augustine sent the interpreters with a message to the king, requesting an interview; and the return of the ambassadors was looked for with the greatest anxiety.

Ethelbert had long been favourably disposed towards the Christian religion, and had watched its effects with an approving eye; but an Anglo-Saxon king was no despot—he could not act independently of advice and control. The monks therefore received a cautious but not unfriendly answer. They were to remain in Thanet till the king should appoint a day for receiving them; but, as a token of good-will towards the strangers, he sent them presents of such things as would add to their comfort while they were encamped in that isolated corner of the kingdom.

The numerous band of foreigners must have attracted the attention of all who passed within sight of them. They probably travelled in monastic dress, the loose black gown, with wide sleeves and hood, though it was not worn at all times. And monks were but beginning to make themselves conspicuous by the tonsure, which till lately had

not far to north-eastward of Sandwich and Rutupiæ, has dwindled down to two inconsiderable houses, which the sea does not approach.

distinguished the clergy exclusively. The tonsure, or mode of shaving the head, which was used to indicate the section of the Church to which he belonged, was of two kinds. The Eastern Church, to which the British Celts adhered, shaved the entire front of the head, leaving the hinder part untouched. The Western Church, to which the Romans belonged, shaved the crown of the head, leaving the hair in a neatly clipped ring below the shorn bald centre: this was called the coronal tonsure[9].

A monk of any sort was an extraordinary individual to an Anglo-Saxon of Thanet; and those forty wearied travellers, with the large dark man who might be distinguished as their leader, must have been objects of great curiosity to the country people, who no doubt feared to approach very near to the mysterious strangers; for we are told that the reason why that broad river was to flow between them and the royal city, was because magical arts were dreaded, and water was considered a sort of non-conductor of magical power, and therefore a safe barrier. A free current of air was also thought to be desirable for those who were in company with persons of questionable character, who might exercise some evil influence over them.

Ethelbert may really have felt some fears lest

[9] Probably, when that fashion was introduced, the meek Redeemer's crown of thorns was not thought of; but afterwards those who looked closely into similes and figures discovered a resemblance.

his judgment should be affected by spells and incantations, and certainly the wisest among his people were not likely to be above such apprehensions. They had from infancy believed in good and evil genii; and, long after Christianity had become the established religion of the land, we see that the trust which many of the converts reposed in the Almighty, was very much the same as that which they had placed in the good genii whom they had been taught to look upon as their guardians and their kind and ready helpers under every sort of trouble and vexation [1].

But a more reasonable prudence may have co-operated with superstition in inducing Ethelbert and his counsellors to act cautiously: it would have been impolitic to have been over-hasty in approving of the Roman mission.

After some days' delay, a time and place were appointed for the interview which Augustine had requested. The spot was marked by an ancient oak, which may have seen the mysterious ceremonies and bloody rites of the Druids; which certainly had seen the forest shadows lie upon the now open space on which the king and queen, and the wisest and noblest of the land, sat down to await the coming of those messengers who said they brought a message from the King of Kings. Stanley has thus graphically described the meeting:—

[1] "It was," says Stanley, "exactly the savage's notion of religion, that it exercises influence, not by moral and spiritual, but by magical means."

"The Saxon king, 'the son of the Ash-tree,' with his wild soldiers round, seated on the bare ground on one side; on the other side, with a huge silver cross borne before him (crucifixes were not yet introduced), and beside it a large picture of Christ, painted and gilded, after the fashion of those times, on an upright board, came up from the shore Augustine and his companions, chanting, as they advanced, a solemn Litany, for themselves and for those to whom they came. He, as we are told, was a man of almost gigantic stature, head and shoulders taller than any one else; with him were Lawrence, who afterwards succeeded him as Archbishop of Canterbury, and Peter, who became the first abbot of St. Augustine's. They and their companions, amounting altogether to forty, sat down at the king's command, and the interview began. Neither, we must remember, could understand the other's language. Augustine could not understand a word of Anglo-Saxon, and Ethelbert, we may be tolerably sure, could not speak a word of Latin. But the priests whom Augustine had brought from France, as knowing both German and Latin, now stepped forward as interpreters; and thus the dialogue which followed was carried on much as all communications are carried on in the East. Augustine first delivered the message, which the dragoman, as they would say in the East, explained to the king. The king heard it all attentively, and then gave this characteristic answer, bearing upon it a stamp of truth which it

is impossible to doubt—'Your words are fair, and your promises; but because they are new and doubtful, I cannot give my assent to them, and leave the customs which I have so long observed with the whole Anglo-Saxon race. But because you have come here as strangers from a long distance, and as I seem to myself to have seen clearly that what you yourselves believe to be good and true you wish to impart to us, we do not wish to molest you; nay, rather, we are anxious to receive you hospitably, and to give you all that is needed for your support, nor do we hinder you from joining all whom you can to the faith of your religion.'

"Such an answer, simple as it was, really seems to contain the seeds of all that is excellent in the English character—exactly what a king should have said on such an occasion—exactly what, under the influence of Christianity, has grown up into all our best institutions. There is the natural dislike of change which Englishmen still retain; there is the willingness, at the same time, to listen favourably to any thing which comes recommended by the energy and self-devotion of those who urge it; there is, lastly, the spirit of moderation and toleration, and the desire to see fair play,—which is one of our best gifts, and which, I hope, we shall never lose. We may, indeed, well be thankful, not only that we had an Augustine to convert us, but that we had an Ethelbert for our king[2]."

[2] Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury."

The missionaries seem to have made a favourable impression on their audience, for they were permitted to cross the river, and a second interview took place at Rutupiæ, which must have passed off satisfactorily, as they were allowed to proceed thence to the chief city, about twelve miles distant.

And so, cheered on by encouragements they had not anticipated, supported by royal favour and temporal power they had not dared to calculate on, the tired pilgrims made the last stage of the long journey. They did not stop until they came in sight of Cantwara-burh, the town of the Kentish men, in the valley of the Stour on a bend of the strong broad river. There were portions of the city which marked it as the Durovernum of the Romans; the old wall, the castle, and other towers, with, perhaps, a basilica, or hall of justice. Probably these venerable buildings were still serviceable, though they belonged to a by-gone age, whose memories they helped to keep alive[3].

The monks and clergymen formed themselves in procession, and agreed that the sweet voice of young Honorius should lead the choir. Honorius and Jacobus, the two youngest of the party, had been trained by Gregory himself in that convent on the Cælian Hill.

Again, those conspicuous representations of the

[3] The walls and castle now seen are Norman; but the Romans had strongly fortified Durovernum.

Redeemer and the cross were held high above the heads of the multitude, who came out from their houses to gaze on this surprising novelty. As the Italians entered the city, they sang one of those Litanies which Gregory had composed when the plague was raging at Rome—"We beseech Thee, O Lord, in all Thy mercy, that Thy wrath and Thine anger may be removed from this city, and from Thy holy house. Hallelujah, Hallelujah."

We may be sure that this Hallelujah was raised with one accord, in no cold or hesitating tone, by those who looked round on the gathering of fair Saxon faces, remembering the scene in the market-place at Rome, and rejoicing in that they were the instruments chosen to fulfil the long-cherished desire of their beloved chief pastor. On they marched, quite through the heathen city, singing Hallelujah in alternate choirs.

At the Stable Gate they stopped just beyond the city wall and not far from where the church of St. Alphege now stands; that was the end of the journey. The word "stable" is an old Saxon word which signified rest, or the laying down of a burden after a journey; and that gate which led out towards the north-west was called the Stable Gate, because just beyond it stood a house of accommodation for strangers—what Bede calls a *hospitium*, and what the Saxons commonly called a *gest-hus*[4]. This guest-house, originally a temple

[4] That part of the city is now called Staple Gate. In

erected by pagan Rome for idol worship, was the resting-place of the Benedictine monks.

Here the Italians spent their first winter. It must have been a comfortless habitation; but the king generously provided them with all necessaries, and they had been brought through so many perplexities and perils, that they cheerfully endured mere privations. They had found, like many others who have courageously undertaken an heroic enterprise, that the dangers had been exaggerated—that they had made up their minds to brave more difficulties and hardships than they were called on to encounter.

They lived in primitive simplicity, sharing all things in common, and gaining influence, as much by their consistent behaviour and pleasant manners, as by their persuasive arguments.

Queen Bertha now had powerful coadjutors; and Ethelbert, who had already pondered over the rudiments of the faith set before him by his wife and the French clergymen of her Church, determined on exercising the liberty of conscience which he had not denied to his subjects. He openly listened to the preaching of the Gospel, received instruction, and was baptized on Whit-Sunday, June 2nd, 597. The day is named, but not the place. Local tradition says it was St. Martin's Church, and tradition may be accepted

ancient records the letters "b" and "p" often change places; so do also "b" and "v," as in Durovernum and Cassivellaunus.

when all probabilities are in its favour, and when there is not one word to contradict, or cast a doubt upon it[5].

And that was the last "Pentecost of Columcille[6]," for Columba was called up to join the Church triumphant just a week after Ethelbert had taken his place in the ranks of the Church militant. He who had so diligently redeemed the time through evil days, exchanged time for eternity on the 9th of June, 597[7]. Columba was watching for that morning; and immediately after midnight he said—"this day is called the Sabbath; that is, the day of rest, and such will it truly be to me, for it will put an end to my labours." He had attained the age of seventy-seven, and his decline had been very gradual; to the last, his bodily strength was not perfectly prostrated, for he expired as he knelt before the altar.

The sun had not yet risen when Diarmid, one of those who had come with him from Ireland, found him lying there. "He lifted the old abbot's venerable head upon his knees; the whole community soon arrived with lights, and wept as one man at the sight of their dying father. Columba

[5] Stanley.

[6] Old MS. among the Annals of Innisfallen. See Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba."

[7] For explanation of the date given of St. Columba's death, see "Additional Notes" to Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba," p. 309, published by the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society.

opened his eyes once more, and turned them on his children on either side with a look full of radiant joy. Then, with the aid of Diarmid, he raised his hand to bless them all—the hand dropped, the last sigh came from his lips; and his face remained calm and sweet, like that of a man who had seen a vision of heaven[8]."

Columba's death, following so closely on Ethelbert's baptism, forms a remarkable coincidence. The soldier of the Cross who had been sent to kindle and to tend the beacon fire which illuminated a large portion of our island, was not to leave it until another signal light had appeared in the darkness on the other side—a token which might have helped the good men of those days more clearly to understand that both were burning by the direction of one master-mind, that of the Lord of Hosts, the Captain of our Salvation. And now those beacon lights are beaming over lands which Columba, Augustine, and Ethelbert never heard of.

St. Columba was a great admirer of St. Martin's character, and seems to have kept that example continually before him. In tracing out the lives of these two holy men, a similarity is observable, allowing for the two hundred years which intervened between them. Of the one as well as of the other, it may be said, "His was the gift of ruling souls by ruling himself." Both had exchanged the

[8] Montalembert.

helmet for the cowl. Columba, who was of royal birth, had had a great deal of fighting in his young days. He had been a renowned warrior in Erin; and the monasteries which he founded, and which flourished long after his death, seem to have been the retreats chosen by many retired soldiers.

> "Illustrious the soldiers were in Hy,
> Thrice fifty in monastic rule,
> With their curachs across the sea,
> And for rowing three-score men [9]."

Soon after the baptism of the King of Kent, Augustine undertook a journey to the south of France, that he might be consecrated to the episcopal office by Virgilius, Bishop of Arles, the only one of the French metropolitans who was in direct communion with Rome. Pope Gregory sent him the pall, a splendid robe of state, flowing from the shoulders to the feet, one of the insignia of office; and gave him all the authority it was in his power to confer over the bishops of the British islands. He did not foresee the jealousy that would arise; for although he had sought information respecting the state of Britain, it was not possible for him to have obtained accurate knowledge of the geography and political condition of that remote land, which had been the first to escape from the Imperial yoke. He evidently had

[9] From Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba," which gives also many of Columba's own compositions, both in prose and poetry, in Latin and in the Irish tongue.

no idea of the antipathy existing between Briton and Saxon, although it was but the natural result of the struggle which had raged for a hundred and fifty years.

Gregory gave Augustine no authority over the French bishop and clergy; "for," said he, "we must not put the sickle into another man's standing corn."

The first Archbishop of Canterbury was consecrated at Arles on the 16th of November, 597. When he had returned to Kent, invested with additional power and dignity, Ethelbert determined on giving him a dwelling-place and house of prayer within the city, and he prepared to transfer his own royal residence. The Roman fortress of Regulbrum on the cliff, near the north-western end of the estuary of the Stour, about seven miles from Canterbury, was therefore converted into a palace; and there the king maintained regal state during the remainder of his life. The old palace of the Kings of Kent, and the primitive Christian church near it, were given up to the clergy and the monks.

When Augustine received that gift, he wrote to Gregory, asking how heathen temples were to be treated. Gregory replied that he had thought much on the subject, and had come to the conclusion that they were not to be destroyed, but turned into Christian churches whenever it was possible to do so; and that the oxen which used to be sacrificed, should still be given by their

owners, and killed for feasting the poor on Christian festivals.

The little church was purified and restored, and dedicated to St. Pancras, a boy-martyr, a Roman of noble family, who, while he was yet a child, contended manfully for the faith under the Diocletian persecution, and was beheaded behind the Vatican when he was only fourteen years old. In after ages he was looked upon as a sort of patron saint of boys, and his name was given at Canterbury, in allusion to those young Angles of Deiraland whose sufferings had been conducive to such glorious results.

The ruined arch of old St. Pancras is a very precious relic; it memorializes the greatness of Gregory's Christian charity; it bears witness to the interesting fact, that England's Church and State rose hand in hand, under the first of her many famous and noble-hearted monarchs—him who ruled our country in its infancy. Of nations, as well as of individuals, it may be said:

"The child is father to the man."

The ruin stands in that large meadow at the back of St. Augustine's College, the surface of which is so remarkably uneven, because many ancient foundations are buried beneath the grass. The body of the little church, only thirty feet long by twenty-one wide, is now sunk beneath the level of the surrounding turf. Nature has filled up the hollow which we still look on as hallowed ground,

in her own wild way, and has almost hidden it by a clump of trees bent down with years. But by mounting upon one of the hillocks, you get a good view of the arch, and a fragment of wall composed of rough stone and flint, and plenty of the red tiles which prove that the Romans once built here, though men of other races have since handled their materials. Those crumbling walls accept every little wall-flower seed brought by bird or autumn breeze; so, year by year, as spring returns, fragrant golden blossoms decorate our first St. Pancras church, which still helps to keep alive the name of one who, even in the bright spring-time of life, was faithful unto death. And when there are no wall-flowers, we observe the perpetual freshness of that simple plant which clings to the forsaken sanctuary. The sere leaf and the green leaf are now the preachers there; plainly and forcibly they speak of regeneration, of death, and of resurrection.

There had also been a larger church at Canterbury; we may suppose that it was of considerable size and importance, because Canterbury had been one of the chief cities of Britain throughout the Roman and post-Roman periods. But the Saxons had swept the churches from the land, or had made them desolate by scattering or driving away those who used to meet within them. King Ethelbert gave back the remains of that ancient church, with a considerable tract of ground around it; and the church was rebuilt under Augustine's

direction. The chief entrance was left where it had been, at the south side of the building—a peculiarity which is not attributable to the Italians. The old churches in Wales and Cornwall are built on that plan.

The stones which Augustine, Ethelbert, and Bertha, looked upon,—which they saw fitted into their places,—have all disappeared, or cannot be distinguished now. But still Christ-church Cathedral is there; and as we see it standing in solemn grandeur, we feel thankful that Celt, Roman, and Saxon, and all who have helped to carry on and complete the edifice, are one in Christ.

The beautiful porch at the southern entrance arrests attention, and is worthy of close inspection. Carefully sculptured figures of Augustine, Lanfranc, Anselm, and Cranmer, are above the arch; on either side stand Ethelbertus Rex, and Bertha Regina, he holds in his hand a model of his little Saxon church, she wears the graceful robe and simple crown of the period; the features are delicately chiselled. It was well to station there those door-keepers in the house of our God, who opened the gates of the Church of England, A.D. 597. What an eventful year that was! The king was baptized, the see of Canterbury founded, and the groundwork of the Cathedral given by Ethelbert to Augustine.

The king did not force Christianity on his subjects; on the contrary, he sent forth a declaration, assuring them that he did not desire to

compel any one to change his religion, because "the service of God should be voluntary." Nevertheless, on the 25th of December, ten thousand Saxons were baptized.

Since that day, millions upon millions have entered into our Church, and all have heard the call to go up higher, from the visible to the invisible temple—the house of God not made with hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOUNDATION STONES.

"The Church of St. Martin is the mother church, and the Cathedral of Canterbury the mother cathedral of England. And St. Augustine's Abbey was the mother school, the mother university of England, the seat of letters and study at a time when Cambridge was a desolate fen, and Oxford a tangled forest in a wide waste of waters."—*Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury."*

THE Swale is that river which separates the Isle of Sheppey from the mainland of Kent. At its wide estuary, near the mouth of the Medway, those ten thousand Anglo-Saxons were baptized. The name of the river has occasioned confusion, as it has been mistaken for the Yorkshire Swale, which is more generally known.

The Stour of Canterbury was not made use of for the National Christening, because it was not the baptism of the citizens of Canterbury, but that of the inhabitants of Kent. West Kent must have furnished a fair proportion of converts, for it immediately appeared necessary to appoint a bishop and build a church for Roffcestria, a town which

had sprung up round a castle on the Medway's bank, built by the Saxon leader Roffe, one of Hengist's followers.

On the Christmas day of 597, when the sun had risen to shine upon the wintry scene, the people of all ranks and ages flocked to meet the ministers of God on the margin of that broad expanse of water where the rivers meet to pay their tribute to the sea [1]. The lay-members of the hitherto small congregation of Christ's Church gladly took part in the solemnity; and the converts went down to the water and were led up from it two by two. Above the hushed murmur of the multitude, and the surging of the sea, the names of the Eternal Trinity were heard repeated again and again, through hour after hour, till the sun had gone down upon that Christmas-day.

Fuller suggests that there could not have been time for more than the simple sacrament, the water and the words. However that may have been, we may be sure that the heart of every real Christian in that vast assembly was lifted up to prostrate itself before the throne of grace—was lifted up, even if in unspoken adoration, to join "the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of angels" rejoicing as when they first proclaimed "the tidings of great joy."

We feel astonishment and awe when that

1 The Medway and the Swale fall into the wide mouth of the Thames.

glorious day is put before us, although we have seen that there had been previous preparation through a long course of years. But the pages of history which are open to us were not open to King Ethelbert and his subjects, nor even to Augustine and his monks: they felt that the story of their own times was wonderful; but they could not read it by the same light which illuminates us.

Intense excitement prevailed through every class of converts when that baptism of the ten thousand was thought of and talked of as the great event of the day. "Of course some extraordinary things had occurred, which became more extraordinary in narration; facts were associated with fictions, and sensations mistaken for revelations." Dr. Hook compares the excitement to that which stirred the hearts of thousands under the preaching of John Wesley[2].

The Saxons had been fed on marvels, nurtured in superstition from earliest infancy, therefore strong excitement naturally took a superstitious turn; and the multitude and the monks all rushed to the conclusion that supernatural power was being manifested. They do not carry us along with them, we look on calmly enough, our point of observation being more than a thousand years beyond them; and, on the other hand, they were ~~as it is~~ much nearer than we are to the earliest age of the Church, when certainly the holy Apostles

[2] "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

wrought miracles in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet surely a miraculous display of divine power could scarcely have been more marvellous, more merciful, more contrary to the natural course, in an age when violence was rampant over the earth, than was the extraordinary fact that so great a religious revolution was so quietly effected; there were no pagan persecutors, no Christian martyrs, not one drop of blood was shed.

A highly esteemed French historian of our own day tells us that in Italy, Gaul, and Spain, the propagation of the Gospel and the extinction of paganism are surrounded with such obscurity that it is impossible to be sure of the date at which the first evangelists of most of the dioceses lived. In England, on the other hand, nothing is vague and uncertain. Year by year, and day by day, we witness the various phases of the grand event. We take part, as it were, in the very work—the conversion of a great country—which it is so rarely possible to study in detail. We can follow it in all its changes of fortune with the same certainty and precision as if it were an incident in our contemporary missions[3].

After the baptism of the ten thousand, additional churches and convents were evidently required; the building at Christ Church was hastened on, a monastery was commenced near it, and an Epis-

[3] Montalembert.

copal See was founded at Roffcestra. The Church there was called St. Andrew's, in memory of Gregory's home on the Cælian Hill; and Justus, one of the Italians, was made the first Bishop of Rochester[4].

We can imagine how the news from Kent was received at Rome; and our veneration for the good bishop who presided there is increased as we read his reply to Augustine's letter. Gregory had become aware of Augustine's weakness; the human infirmity had revealed itself gradually to the reflective mind of the watchful chief pastor. He perceived undue elation of spirit, and affectionately warned "his most loving brother" to rejoice with fear, and to be carefully on his guard lest his mind should become puffed up with vain-glory. He reminded him that, although it was lawful to rejoice that, by wonders from without, the souls of men were moved, so that they were sanctified by inward grace; yet when the disciples of our Lord returned with joy to their heavenly Master, and said, "Lord, in Thy name the very devils are subject to us," our Lord's answer was, "Rejoice not for this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." He concluded by exhorting Augustine to the strictest self-examination; "and if, he said, you find that at any time you have offended against your Creator by word or deed, be sure that you

[4] In the grant for lands made by Ethelbert to support the Church, walls are mentioned, and a gate near the Medway, which shows that the town had attained some importance.

call the offence continually to your mind, that the remembrance of your guilt may crush any vanity that may arise in your heart[5]."

Thus heartily and carefully did Gregory perform the duties of a Father in the Church of Christ, although his state of health was such as would have completely incapacitated an ordinary man. He felt the trial keenly, as we may see from his letters to his most intimate friends, and from the Preface to his "Commentary on the Book of Job." Gregory was suffering under a more than usual pressure of bodily illness throughout that year so happily eventful to England; yet his mind was the mainspring which directed the newly-formed machinery of all the religious institutions in Kent.

As soon as the priory near Christ-church was ready for inmates, another large party of clergy and Benedictine monks arrived from Rome, all eager to put the sickle into the field, which seemed to have ripened so quickly for the harvest. They were an earnest body of missionaries, indefatigable in teaching and preaching, and so desirous to make the most of their time, that even when they took their meals, the lector was always at his post to read aloud.

They had very few books; we hear of only one copy of the Bible, one Testament, and a Psalter, for the use of the whole community; but they accustomed themselves to commit whole chapters

[5] From Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops."

to memory, which they repeated when giving instruction. Gregory afterwards sent them one or two manuscript Gospels; two are still existing, one in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; the other in the Bodleian Library at Oxford [6].

The most able and learned of the missionaries soon had engrossing employment for head and hand put before them by the king; who, not long after his baptism, assembled the Witenagemot, and by the advice of his counsellors, and with the assistance of the missionaries, revised the statutes of the kingdom. That code of eighty-nine laws, long known as the Dooms of Ethelbert, was then composed. It is the most ancient English code extant,—nearly three hundred years older than that of Alfred the Great—so it is hardly fair to compare them, though Ethelbert's Dooms show great regard for the person and liberty of the subject, and recognize Christianity as the religion of the State. These statutes were all compiled and repeatedly copied by the monks of Canterbury. They were written in the Saxon language by the king's command, as he wisely considered that laws which all were bound to obey, should be intelligible to all.

It is much to be regretted that they did not also act on that principle with regard to the prayers and praises of public worship, in which all ought to

[6] Hook and Stanley.

unite; these were still recited in Latin, but we are told that catechizing and preaching were performed in the speech of the country.

The clergy of the early Church considered themselves as belonging to Christendom, rather than to the countries where they were born or stationed; they felt, therefore, strongly attached to the grand old language common throughout the then known world. The desire for a universal perfect language is one of those aspirations which tell, not of the depths into which man has fallen, but of the height whence he fell; it is one of the longings that will be satisfied when all the promises are fulfilled[7].

The Italian clergy were permitted to officiate occasionally in St. Martin's church; and it soon fell entirely under their direction, in consequence of Luidhard's death. No particulars of that event have come down to us; but we may be sure that the good old man departed thankful for the changes he had lived to see, and that he resigned his work in the spirit of meekness to those who had been sent to take it from his dying hands.

Queen Bertha must have deeply mourned the aged friend who had accompanied her from her native country, although the arrival of the Italians had brought her many advantages. The priory of Christ-church was no new thing to her; she had been accustomed to monasteries in her own land, had grown up looking upon them as the schools of the useful and ornamental arts, as well as of

[7] Zeph. iii. 9.

every kind of learning[8]; and at that time monks were not excluded from society, nor debarred from the amusements of the laity, which, as we have seen, were various. The prohibitions afterwards enforced, prove that persons devoted to religious life had participated in the pleasures of the world to a degree which required checking by more stringent rules. But no doubt the king and queen of Kent, and the members of the royal household, were on pleasant terms of intimacy with the educated men of the priory; and such companionship must have tended to refine the minds of the earls and thanes, who hitherto had cared only to excel in putting forth muscular strength and animal spirit.

And we read, that, as time went on, there were those who began to loathe the excesses of the Mead Hall, and the boisterous mirth resulting from intoxication and often ending in quarrels and bloodshed; there were those who desired to lead a life consistent with the religion they professed, and found it difficult to do so in the camp and the court, or at the country seat, where perpetual open house was kept. To such men, monastic life became attractive, and so monasteries filled and multiplied[9].

[8] All kinds of work were done in convents. The monks excelled as carvers, workers in wood, stone, and metal, and in trades and manufactures of every kind which the community required.

[9] Hook.

The priory of Christ-church, which was connected with, or stood close to, the little Saxon church which is now the grand cathedral, did not afford sufficient accommodation, for monks were continually coming from abroad, and also springing up at home. The generous king, therefore, gave another large tract of land, whereon a superior monastery was to be built, like those of France and Italy; and near it an extensive cemetery was to be laid out as a burial-place for the kings and the archbishops.

In the charter of the site of St. Augustine's monastery, the ground is described as lying under the east wall of the city [1]. The first stone was laid with prayer and praise, and thanksgiving for past and present mercies, in which a large congregation united. The building was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, although, as it rose from its foundations, the inhabitants of the city generally called it Augustine's monastery.

The erection of so large a stone building was slowly accomplished in those days; but, as the work proceeded, it took effect on the minds of the people. A large monastery was a novelty to them, but they had heard of those which had long been established on the Continent, and of the many improvements which had resulted to the land as well as to the people round. The means of subsistence had been increased by improved methods of agri-

[1] Being connected with the cemetery, it was outside the city wall. Augustine would naturally object to intramural interment, which was forbidden by Roman law.

culture and horticulture, and the Saxon had sense enough to see in those advantages types of the benefits arising from the mental cultivation which he was beginning to value and acquire, and which he desired his children might enjoy to a further extent.

The remarkable event next in order, is the baptism of another royal convert. Sebert, King of Essex, visited his uncle's Court, and was persuaded to embrace Christianity. London was the capital of his little kingdom. We have no reason for believing that this city was ever ravaged and made desolate by the Saxon invaders. It appears to have afforded a shelter to the people of West Kent, when that district was overrun by the Saxons in their first inroads; and the city seems to have passed so quietly from the vanquished to the victorious race, that it experienced no check to its prosperity, and was a rich trading town at the close of the sixth century[2]. In former times the Celtic Church had flourished there, for we read of Bishops of London who attended the General Councils or Synods of the Catholic Church. Archbishop Ussher informs us that "in the year 587 the Bishop of London and other Bishops retired to Wales, where by their labours they so plentifully propagated the Gospel, that they made those parts especially glorious by the multitude of their holy saints and learned teachers."

As the Bishop of London had so recently aban-

[2] Wright.

doned his diocese, less than ten years before the arrival of Augustine, we can hardly believe that Christianity could have quite died out: there must have been hidden glimmerings, though the ruling powers were in darkness like that of Egypt, when those who were in a state of bondage, the despised and oppressed, had light in their dwellings. There must have been Christians in the land, and such must have felt themselves deserted by their pastors, must have grieved over the ruins of their churches and the loss of all religious privileges; and as Christians they must have desired that even their adversaries should be brought to Christ.

But the Celt of that generation could very rarely convert a Saxon; the enmity between the races was too strong, and the Saxon was not likely to adopt the religion of a conquered people, upon whom he looked down.

Many of Sebert's subjects followed his example. King Ethelbert, therefore, having finished Christ Church at Canterbury, built a church in London for his nephew. It was dedicated to the great Apostle of the Gentiles. That was the Saxon beginning of St. Paul's, which is said to have been raised on a Roman foundation.

Sir Christopher Wren thought that there had been a Roman church on that site, in which opinion he was confirmed; as, when searching for the foundations of his own design, he met with those of the original presbyterium, or circular chancel of the old church. They consisted of

Kentish rubble stone skilfully worked, and consolidated with exceedingly hard mortar, in the Roman manner. Sir Christopher did not entertain the popular idea, which has been repeatedly stated, that a temple of Diana had once existed there, though he discovered funeral urns and other remains of the pagan Roman period[3].

But Ethelbert saw on that hill only the fragments of a church said to have been already twice destroyed; during the Diocletian persecution, and during the Saxon invasion. It had possibly been rebuilt after its first fall, when the Church rested, in the days of Constantine the Great. Ethelbert certainly raised it up from the ruined condition to which his ancestors had reduced it. Restoration is God's own great work; and it must be man's work again and again, if he would co-operate with his God.

London, though attached to an insignificant kingdom, was an important city. The Roman walls round it enclosed a space extending from on and around Ludgate Hill, to a little beyond where the Tower now stands. Gregory had intended to make London the metropolitan see; but circumstances had frustrated that intention, and had favoured Canterbury. Mellitus was consecrated Bishop of London by Augustine, on which Roger of Wendover remarks, "Thus the dignity of that city, which in times of the Britons had always had its Archbishop, was now transferred to Canterbury,

[3] See Appendix on St. Paul's.

that the prophecy of Merlin might be fulfilled, who said, "Religion shall be destroyed in the island, and there shall be a change of the principal sees; the dignity of London shall adorn Canterbury."

The first Archbishop of Canterbury was not insensible to the advantages appertaining to this superior dignity, but the responsibilities of the position were very heavy; his powers were taxed almost beyond their strength, for he does not appear to have been a man of extraordinary mental capacity. He was encompassed with difficulties, and unfortunately was not the man to see his way through them as clearly as some might have done. The compilation of a Liturgy for the Anglo-Saxon Church was very perplexing to him.

There were in the Primitive Church four principal Liturgies, claiming a common origin:

1st. The Great Oriental, of which St. James was said to be the author.

2ndly. The Alexandrian, traced to St. Mark.

3rdly. The Roman, said to have been composed by St. Peter.

4thly. The Gallican, derived probably from Ephesus and St. John.

The services in the queen's church were performed according to the Gallican Liturgy. As this differed from the Roman, it may have been distasteful to Augustine, who was narrow-minded and sectarian. But the queen was not to be offended, and the Gallican Liturgy could not be

suppressed without creating a controversy in the infant Church.

Augustine consulted Gregory, whose reply is worthy of record. He advises the new Archbishop, in arranging the services of the English Church, not to bind himself down to Italian, Gallican, or any other, but to select out of every Church what is pious, religious, and right, and so to form a new Liturgy for the Church of England—an English one, for (alluding to Augustine's too narrow attachment to every thing Italian), he observes, "Things are not to be valued on account of places, but places for the good things they contain[4]."

But Augustine's greatest difficulties arose out of the opposition he met with from the British bishops. He appears to have sincerely desired that the two parties should avoid discord, even if they could not amalgamate, and that they should co-operate in projects for the conversion of the heathen. At that time there were no important points of doctrine at issue between the Roman and the British Churches, the teaching of the one did not differ materially from that of the other; of this we are assured by historians of every shade of opinion. The firm stumbling-block, which neither Augustine, nor his partisans, nor his opponents, could get over, lay within himself. Most ardently did he aspire to be made "a pillar in the temple of our God;" and surely we shall see that aspiration

[4] Dr. Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

realized when we behold the perfect edifice, the Church in Glory[5].

But as yet Augustine had not *overcome* the ungenerous pride which narrowed the compass of his mind and irritated his temper: he was impatient and domineering when others dared to place themselves on a level with him; that was impertinence he could hardly brook, although, so anxious was he to be on friendly terms with the Celtic prelates, that he really tried to bear with them. It seems strange that he should have so completely failed to make amicable arrangements, although he was supported by Ethelbert, whose authority as Bretwalda extended over all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

By the advice of that monarch he had proposed a meeting, which took place on the banks of the Severn, in Gloucestershire, or Worcestershire, at St. Augustine's Oak, as the spot was afterwards called; but on that occasion the discussion did more harm than good.

Dr. Hook enlightens us as to the cause of the failure: he tells us — "Both parties were aware that the object of the conference was to decide whether the two branches of the holy Catholic Church now existing in the land should unite under one head — that head being the Archbishop of Canterbury. Augustine, in unconscious pride and imaginary humility, thought that he was

[5] Rev. iii. 12.

stooping to an act of condescension in asking, as a concession, that the British bishops should submit to what he supposed he had a right to demand. Very different were the feelings of the British bishops themselves. They had no notion of being treated with condescension by one who was only their equal. The British Church was no doubt under circumstances of deep depression; but it was a section of that great Celtic church which, both in Ireland and in the northern parts of Britain, was celebrated, not only for the cultivation of biblical literature, but also for its missionary schools; and, on the other hand, Dr. Hook tells us with respect to the Italians, that "there was an inaptitude on their part to organize measures of missionary enterprise. They wanted courage, energy, and sound judgment. They seemed to say, 'We are the men; wisdom will die with us:' and, because they were Romans, they expected all kings to bow down before them, and all bishops to acknowledge their supremacy."

Although the first conference had been lamentably unsuccessful, a second was determined on. There is a curious story connected with it, related by Bede, and repeated by many historians. Seven British bishops held a preliminary meeting to consult together, as to how Augustine and his proposals should be treated; and some of them bitterly complained of his conduct on the former occasion. They had met at the abode of a hermit whom they wished to consult, as he had great repu-

tation for piety and discretion. The hermit advised them to accept Augustine for their chief ruler, if he were a man of God. The bishops asked "How are we to know that he is a man of God?" The hermit replied, "If Augustine be meek and lowly of heart, he bears the yoke of Christ, and the yoke of Christ is all that he will desire to put upon you; but if he be proud and haughty, you may be sure that he is not a man of God." So they determined on testing his personal character: the trial was indeed a hard one, for it bore upon his weakest point. They therefore arranged so as to allow Augustine and his party to arrive first at the place of meeting; for the hermit had said, "If Augustine rise up to meet you, then accede to his proposals; but if he treat you with contempt, have nothing to do with him." The British bishops and the men of learning from the monastery at Bangor, with Dinoot their president at their head, formed themselves, accordingly, into an imposing procession, and approached the spot where Augustine sat in as much state as could be assumed in a presence-chamber canopied by the blue sky, and carpeted by the green grass and those lowly flowers which God has made to be trodden under foot, that they may become teachers of humility. Augustine seems to have liked processions; but upon this occasion he was not impressed by the dignified demeanour of the prelates and scholars who approached him. He was seated, and he did not rise to meet the bishops as his equals, but treated them as inferiors summoned into

the presence of a superior. His arguments and exhortations, therefore, had no effect, except to exasperate some of those to whom they were addressed.

But Dinost, the Abbot of Bangor, replied to the Archbishop of Canterbury in a moderate and courteous manner, telling him they were perfectly aware that they owed deference to the rulers of the Church of Christ throughout the world, and love and charity to all men; but that they needed no other overseer than the Bishop of Caerleon, who had authority to take care of their churches and spiritual affairs. Augustine still persevered: he said, "I only ask three things of you—one, that you should keep Easter as we do[6]; another, that you should baptize according to the Roman ritual; a third, that you should join us in preaching to the Angles; with your other peculiarities we will patiently bear."

This speech did not shake the resolution of his opponents, who unanimously refused to receive him as their metropolitan; and they assigned as their reason, that, if he did not treat them with respect while they were his equals, what could they expect if they elected him their superior? Augustine lost his temper, and made an indignant reply, concluding with these words, "If you will not have peace with brethren, you shall have war with enemies; if you will not show your neighbours

[6] See note in Appendix on the time for keeping Easter.

the way of life, their swords shall avenge the wrong by putting you to death." These hasty words were remembered long after the passionate man who spoke them had forgotten them: long after he was in his grave, they were remembered by those superstitious people as a prophecy, a curse, which was thought to be fulfilled when Ethelfrid, King of Bernicia, destroyed the grand old monastery of Bangor [7], consumed the archives of the British Church, and massacred the abbot and the monks, among whom were several of those who had met and resisted Augustine. It is said that twelve hundred monks were slain, and only fifty escaped by flight.

It is grievous to think that Augustine's name should ever have been connected with so horrible an atrocity. As we read of that meeting of the bishops, we clearly see both the mote in the eye of the Celt and the beam in the eye of the Italian, though each was unconscious of the blemish in himself, being intently occupied with his brother's inperfection.

Augustine's conspicuous fault is a very common one; how often does it separate those who ought to be united, and prevent equally faithful servants

[7] Ban-gor, the sacred circle. There were sixteen places so called in Wales. This was Bangor Iscoed, in Flintshire. Stillingfleet describes the monastery as standing in a valley surrounded by a wall, through which there were two entrance gates, a mile distant from each other.

of the heavenly Master from working together in harmony [8]!

> "Yet deem not on such parting sad
> Shall dawn no welcome dear and glad.
> Divided in their earthly race,
> Together at the glorious goal,
> Each leading many a rescued soul,
> The faithful champions shall embrace."
>
> KEBLE.

The Archbishop returned to Canterbury, where, being well known, he was much respected, and where his many virtues shone to the glory of God, and to the edification of the rude people whose interests he had so much at heart. He resided in the old regal palace which had been turned into a Cathedral monastery; for when the Bishop of Rome had sent the pall to Augustine, he had reminded him that, being a monk, he would not require a separate establishment. Gregory,—who, in his celebrated work on "Pastoral Care," especially inculcated humility as a grace required in the Christian pastor,—seems to have consistently discouraged Augustine's haughtiness, and his love of power and homage; and no doubt he thought it good for the Archbishop to continue living under the Benedictine rule. The purity of Gregory's affection for his friends, so warm

[8] "The fusion of the Celtic Church into the Anglo-Saxon,—for such it really was, rather than a union,—was effected, so far as the main branches were concerned, at an early period."—*Hook.*

and unworldly, yet so impartial and judicious, is one of the most attractive features of his admirable character; and it has been well said, that no where is it more beautifully displayed than in his relations with Augustine[0]:

There were two kinds of monasteries, cloisteral and cathedral. The Cloisteral Monastery was governed by an Abbot, or a Prior. The Cathedral Monastery was governed by the Bishop, who was also the Abbot; and his convent was the chapter of the Cathedral church, so that the monks were Cathedral canons. Augustine had become at the same time Archbishop of Canterbury and Abbot of Christchurch, and his companions at once canons of the Cathedral and brethren of the monastery[1]. The whole country became gradually overspread with monasteries; the small ones for a long time were used as rural parish churches.

Episcopal instead of regal hospitality might now be maintained in the old Saxon palace, for liberality might be as profusely displayed in the monastery as at the Court or on the ethel; and the festivals of the Church were literally feast days. Convents were open at all times for the relief of travellers of every degree, accommodation was provided for them, and an officer appointed, whose duty it was to give them proper attention, and to see that they conducted themselves discreetly. Although many of

[0] Montalembert.

[1] "Lives of the English Saints," St. Augustine, published by Toovey.

the monks became exceedingly skilful in executing the ornamental as well as the useful arts of working in gold and carving delicately, yet in these early days they lived very simply. Most of those who came to Canterbury were Benedictines. By the rule of St. Benedict every thing in the convent was common property, a man could not even say "my gown" or "my shoes." It was the Abbot's duty to see that each monk was provided with clothes, a straw bed, a piece of serge, a blanket and pillow, a needle, and a steel stylus, and tablets for writing upon. According to the strict rule, no one was allowed to procure for himself any thing beyond these necessaries; but in England the rule was much relaxed in that respect, and those who had the means and inclination to enjoy more comforts were not prevented from so doing. The ordinary refection for those in good health was very simple; but on Sundays and festivals, or on the arrival of guests, there was an improvement in the diet, an addition to the principal repast. Grand entertainments were occasionally given by monastic bodies to the great men of the time. Somner has collected some curious bills of fare in his "History of Canterbury;" on which, one of Augustine's biographers remarks, "No common man could he have been, who, after one of those sumptuous banquets, could settle down at once to his pallet of straw, and his simple meal of fish and eggs[2]."

[2] See "Lives of the English Saints"—Augustine.

We have seen that King Ethelbert liberally endowed the monasteries with broad lands; all landowners received their rents in kind—for instance, a man holding a small cottage would pay his rent in poultry and eggs, another agreed to bring a certain number of pigs. The rent of every farm was fixed at a certain quantity of a specified produce: arable land paid in corn, land near the sea often paid in fish.

We read of an estate which was valued as worth thirty-eight thousand herrings per annum; and the town of Sandwich paid a yearly rent of forty thousand eels to the monks of Canterbury[3]. The monks ate a great deal of fish, as they were allowed little animal food.

As to dress, the Benedictine rule was not arbitrary; for St. Benedict had desired that the monks should consider the climate in which they lived, and dress accordingly. The clergy and monks were prohibited from bearing arms; but that rule was suspended, as regards monks, in case of invasion: they were allowed, if attacked by an enemy, to use the sword in defence of their lives and their country. An Abbot of Canterbury figures in more than one of the old ballads which relate the exploits of the men of Kent.

That large monastery, which had gradually risen, was now so far finished that it could be inhabited. Augustine never saw it completed; but it had

[3] Hasted's "History of Kent."

attained to a habitable condition, and was opened with a religious service. It was still commonly called Augustine's Abbey, although, as we have seen, it had been dedicated to two Apostles: the Church in connexion with it was in a very unfinished state. Peter, one of the forty pioneers, was chosen to be the first Abbot; he had lived in St. Andrew's convent at Rome when Augustine was prior.

"The charter of St. Augustine's monastery, which is one of the oldest authentic records of the religious and political history of England, is thus signed:—

"† I Ethelbert, King of the English, have confirmed this gift by my own hand, with the sign of the holy cross."

"† I Augustine, by the grace of God Archbishop, have freely subscribed."

"† I Eadbald, son of the king, have adhered."

Then follow the signatures of seven of the chief nobles—earls, dukes, and thanes; the sign of the cross is prefixed to every name[4].

The cemetery just outside the city wall, along the road which led up the hill past Queen Bertha's Church, had been laid out and planted, and was nearly ready to receive occupants. Was Augustine aware, as he walked there, watching the progress of the workmen, that it would soon be his resting place? He had arrived at the last stage of a journey longer than that which he had performed to bring the Gospel to the Anglo-Saxons. We read of

[4] "Monks of the West."

his consecrating St. Paul's Cathedral in London in the year 603 : it was probably the last time he officiated at a grand public solemnity. In the spring of the following year, his thoughts must have been drawn towards the heavenly home, for when the green leaves which survived him were unfolding, he heard of Gregory's death ; and most likely before he received that news, he had been warned by his own failing health to gather up the fragments of life which remained to him [5]. He had not been an indolent waster of time; and the retrospect of the small portion of his span of years spent in this country, must have been pleasant to him, although no doubt he felt that to God alone belonged the praise.

Dr. Hook very truly says—"Whatever may have been his weakness or his failures, Augustine was permitted to accomplish a great work, which will appear the greater when we remember that what he accomplished was all accomplished within the short space of ten years." The energetic mind and sanguine temperament of Gregory had contemplated the conversion of all England, and the establishment of two metropolitans with twenty-four suffragans. The success of Augustine was confined to the kingdoms of Kent and Essex, and the Archbishop of Canterbury had only two suffragans, the Bishops of London and Rochester. But we generally perceive that those only accomplish great

[5] See Chapter IX., p. 1.

things, who aim at more than they have the ability or time to effect. To have converted more than ten thousand persons to the acceptance of Christianity, and to have been instrumental in bringing vital Christianity home to the hearts of Ethelbert and others such as he, is praise sufficient for an ordinary man, even when placed in extraordinary circumstances."

"Around the death-bed of Augustine knelt, not only the missionaries who had shared his fears, his hardships, and his joys, but that good king who was equally concerned with Augustine in laying the foundations of the Church of England; and to each he delivered some little keepsake as a token of his affection. Augustine died with benedictions and exhortations on his lips; and amid the bright foretaste of his own approaching blessedness, we can easily imagine the hope which thrilled his heart with respect to the future of his Church. He was buried near the unfinished church of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the ground now occupied by the Kent and Canterbury Hospital[6]."

[6] Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH.

"Saint after saint on earth
Has lived, and loved, and died:
And as they left us one by one,
We laid them side by side.

"We laid them down to sleep,
But not in hope forlorn,—
We laid them but to ripen there,
Till the last glorious morn."

DR. HOOK tells us that there is some doubt as to the precise time of Augustine's death; he says, "The Canterbury historians are unanimous in the tradition that he survived Gregory the Great two months, and, taking the date from Bede, fix both in 605. But Gregory really died in 604, and so, according to Florence of Worcester, did Augustine. Wharton's arguments are almost convincing. Unfortunately, the evidence of the charters is wavering and suspicious."

But though there is that shadow of a doubt as to the year in which Gregory and Augustine died, there is no doubt as to the days. Gregory departed

this life on the 12th of March, and Augustine on the 26th of May. In a subsequent age, festivals were appointed to be kept in memory of the Saints; and in 747 Cuthbert, the eleventh Archbishop of Canterbury, ordered that the festivals of Gregory and Augustine should be observed as holidays in all the monasteries in England, and that custom was kept up throughout the kingdom till Henry the Eighth dissolved the religious houses. The day of Gregory's death is still marked on our calendar: he is still gratefully remembered, and in that ruined arch of old St. Pancras we have a monument which bears witness to his achievements and triumphs as faithfully as the column in the Forum at Rome bears witness to the victories of Trajan.

There is a curious stone in that arch, which was an object of popular superstition in the olden time. It was said that the old demon, when he first heard the celebration of Christian services in the Church, set his claws upon that stone, to shake the building down, but was not permitted to do so. Stanley remarks, "The legend of the devil's claw, reads us a true lesson—that the evil spirit can be cast out of institutions without destroying them; that Christianity does not require us to trample on the customs even of a heathen world, if we can divest them of their mischief."

That is the principle in which reformation originates; and the ground-work laid under Gregory's direction, is that which gave our Anglican Church the strength to cast off errors, while she stood firm

on her ancient foundations,—the basis of scriptural truth,—protesting against the very same errors which Gregory had protested against.

What does he say on image worship? "I am lately informed that upon your taking notice that some people worshipped images, you ordered the church pictures to be broken and thrown away. Now, though I commend you for your zeal in preventing the adoration of any thing made with hands, yet, in my opinion, those pictures should not have been broken to pieces. For the design of pictures in churches is to instruct the illiterate, that people may read that in paint, which they have not education enough to read in the book. In my judgment therefore, brother, you are obliged to find out a temper to let the pictures stand in the church, and likewise to forbid the congregation the worship of them, that by this provision, those who are not bred to letters may be acquainted with the Scripture history, and the people, on the other side, preserved from the criminal excess of worshipping images."

In another letter he says, "Let no statuary or painter be discouraged in their profession, but take all imaginable care that nothing made by them be honoured to adoration. Thus by this temper the understandings of the unlearned may be instructed and their affections warmed at the sight of church pictures, and our worship at the same time be all of it reserved for God, and directed to the Holy Trinity."

These last words are very satisfactory, because

they assure us that, although Gregory fell into the mistake of praying for those who no longer need the intercession of the Church on earth, yet he did not worship the departed. But he could not bear to think, with the belief which then prevailed, that all those who had not heard the name of Jesus while they sojourned upon earth, were condemned to eternal death. He prayed that they might be among the redeemed,—saved by the Saviour whom they had not known; and on one occasion he especially implored God's mercy for the soul of Trajan the Emperor, whose character he thought so excellent—prayed for him publicly in St. Peter's Church. No man can be altogether beyond the age in which he lives.

Gregory's principle with respect to the use of pictures, is exactly that on which we use them in our school-rooms, and on our mission-stations, where they materially help the teachers. They are not required in our churches, as almost all the adult members of every congregation can read Scripture history.

Gregory wrote many useful works; the most highly esteemed is that on "Pastoral Care." It was immediately translated into Greek, and King Alfred translated it into the Saxon language. Although addressed particularly to the clergy, it may be profitably studied by all Christians of every generation, because it goes to the root of the matter, touches the heart and conscience, sets forth the grace of humility as the mark which distin-

guishes the real from the mere nominal disciple of Jesus, and enforces the necessity of personal religion.

Gregory had high notions of the responsibilities and duties of the pastoral office, and his life was consistent with his opinions. He did not desire to be a chief pastor; many of his letters show how much he would have preferred declining that position. In replying to a letter of congratulation on his elevation, he asks for the prayers of his friend, for he says, "I am charged with the management of a crazy and leaky bark, an office which I would gladly have shunned." In some letters he laments the loss of his former quiet life; and in one, giving way to that playfulness which was habitual to him, he wrote, "The Emperor has put an ape in the lion's place; but he cannot make the ape a lion." Gregory little thought how long his private letters would survive him, and how widely they would be circulated.

He felt no objection to the title of Pope, which has exactly the same derivation as our familiar word Papa, expressing the union of reverence and affection; but he did not look upon other bishops as his inferiors; for when the Bishop of Alexandria, in writing to him, used the words "as you commanded," Gregory begged him to avoid such expressions; "for," added he, "I have not commanded you, but only sought to explain to you what seems to me to be profitable."

When John, Bishop of Constantinople, was

demanding that the supremacy of that see should be acknowledged, the Pope of Rome violently opposed him, declaring that in his opinion the haughty title of Universal Bishop was contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and injurious to the Catholic Church. Gregory wrote, "By this pride of his, what else is signified but that the time of Antichrist is now at hand?"

The Emperor, for peace sake, wished Gregory to give up the controversy; he said it was not worth while to disagree about a mere title. To this the Pope of Rome replied, that the alteration of style was not of much consequence, but the bulk of the iniquity was weighty enough to sink and destroy all. Gregory would not be silenced; his indignant protests are extant, and as we read the strong expressions, we feel startled to think that they emanated from the mind and were traced by the pen of a Pope of Rome.

He reasoned, that as Antichrist strained his pretensions up to the Godhead, so, whosoever desired to be the only universal bishop, strained his pretensions up to Antichrist, because he partook of the Antichristian character exhibited in the desire to mount himself above the rest of his order; so both split upon the same rock of human pride [1].

[1] Pope Gregory wrote, "This I declare with confidence, that whosoever designates himself Universal Priest, or, in the pride of his heart, consents to be so named, he is the forerunner of Antichrist."—"*The Eighteen Christian Centuries,*" *by the Rev. James White.*

But we are apt to form exaggerated notions of the Papal authority as it existed in the early centuries of the middle ages. Dr. Hook explains that the Papal power was the result of a struggle, and a struggle implies claims made and resisted. Yet only two or three years after Gregory's death, a step was taken to which he would never have consented, even had the Emperor desired it. Pope Boniface the Third sat in the Papal chair, and at his request the Emperor Phocas decreed that the Roman Church should be the head and mistress of all the Churches. For we have now arrived at the era at which both the Papal and Mahometan powers appeared. Though destined to assume such gigantic proportions, they rose as quietly as germs break through the earth, only disturbing the ground around them.

The Bishop of Rome first assumed the title of Universal Bishop, A.D. 606. The worship of images received the sanction of what the Papists call a General Council, A.D. 787. But that Second Council of Nice was, in fact, no General Council at all [2]. This is the earliest authority for any Roman peculiarities, and the Church of England at that early period resisted the novelty; occupying, a thousand years ago, the self-same ground we now maintain, of protesting against the Roman corruptions of the Catholic faith [2]. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was invented about the

[2] Hook.

middle of the twelfth century, and that of Transubstantiation, which seems to have been the culminating point of error, was not fully established till the year 1215, when a new word was coined to express the new doctrine.

Mahomet was thirty years of age before he retired to the desert to perfect his scheme. He did so in 594, two years before Augustine landed in Kent, and about three years before the baptism of Ethelbert; so the false prophet was composing the fictions about his pretended interviews with the angel Gabriel, and his journey to the seventh heaven, just when the king and queen and the people of Kent were rejoicing in the spiritual mercies vouchsafed to them in the introduction of Christianity. Mahomet openly proclaimed himself a prophet in the year 604, the same year in which Gregory and Augustine died; he was then in the fortieth year of his age. The Hegira or Flight;—really the triumphant entry of Mahomet into the city of Mecca,—the era whence the Moslems date, corresponds with July 16, the 622nd year of the Christian era; thus gradually did Popery and Mahometanism arise.

Sometimes stealthily, sometimes rapidly, but always advancing towards an appointed end, those mysterious twin powers have run through a course of 1260 years, that cycle of prophetical significance[3].

In the figurative language of prophecy it seems

[3] See Bishop Newton "On the Prophecies," Dissertation XIV., on the 7th chapter of Daniel, verses 24, 25.

to be indicated that the one is to fall like a city overthrown by the repeated shocks of a tremendous earthquake, while the other is to be as it were dried up, like the Euphrates, when the bed of that ancient river became the soldiers' path, its waters having been led into another channel, that idolatrous Babylon might be destroyed and the temple of Jerusalem rebuilt. Very literally were the predictions relating to these events fulfilled, even such as had been expressed in language partly symbolical. Every great tribulation recorded on the pages of history is a more or less perfect type of that awful consummation which the proud king of the First Empire saw in his dream, when the image, having been smitten by the stone, was broken to pieces, and the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away [4].

"Amongst the old prophets," says the great Sir Isaac Newton, "Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood; and therefore in those things which relate to the last times he must be made the key to the rest. His prophecies are all of them related to one another, as if they were several parts of one general prophecy. The first, on Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is the easiest to be understood, and every following prophecy adds something new to the former [5]."

[4] Dan. ii. 35—45.

[5] Hook's "Church Dictionary:" see Daniel.

"The Apocalypse of St. John is written in the same style

The full meaning of the numerical signs in the Book of Daniel, and in the Revelation of St. John, will be made clear to us hereafter; at present their simplest meaning is sufficient. They are put before us to direct our thoughts to the many plain texts of Holy Scripture which assure us that this dispensation will not last for ever—this condition of unceasing change, wherein nothing continues in one stay; that when the conquest is completed, the kingdom will be established. But, when the chronology of the inspired Word of God is compared with the imperfect chronicles of men, the calculation produces, not a certain date, but an awakening cry like that in the prophetic parable, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh."

In every age of the Church there are Christians who look for the coming of Christ, and who "love His appearing[6]."

Gregory's letter to Ethelbert is full of that animating hope; death is lost sight of in the greater event, which is the scriptural view of the subject. The people of Kent were no doubt

and language with the prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation to them which they have to one another: so that all of them together make one consistent prophecy. It is a part of this grand prophecy that it should not be understood before the last age of the world. . . . As the prophecies are fulfilled, they will be interpreted by the events, and God's providence over His Church will thereby be manifested to the world."—*Hook's "Church Dictionary:" see Apocalypse.*

[6] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

interested in the news from Rome; and the wild exciting tales from Arabia may have reached them. But their knowledge concerning the great events which mark their day was imperfect, and mixed up with mistakes; and it did not affect them in their daily lives more than the great events now transpiring affect us.

The second Archbishop of Canterbury was Laurentius, or Lawrence, who had come from St. Andrew's Convent. Augustine had appointed and consecrated his successor when he felt that his own life was closing. Lawrence was a practical and discreet man, one anxious to conciliate; and he felt more respect than Augustine had for the Celtic Church, for he had ascertained that it was identical with the Scotch or Irish Church, and had derived its Christianity from the Churches in Gaul. The new Archbishop's endeavours to promote kindly feeling worked for good, though the dispute was not ended in his days.

On the Christmas day of 605, St. Augustine's Monastery, being completed, was dedicated to the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, after whom it had been named by Augustine when he laid the foundation stone. There was a grand religious service, which attracted an immense concourse of people; and the king and queen, and Eadbald their son, came over from Reculver to take part in the solemn ceremony [7].

[7] Hasted's History of Kent.

The living and the dead must have seemed near together on that day, when Gregory and Augustine were present to the minds of all; and a few days later, on the 5th of January, 606, King Ethelbert formally delivered up the monastery to the Church, enriched with lands and ample gifts[8].

Queen Bertha's death is supposed to have taken place some time in the course of the year which had been thus happily commenced, but we have no record of the event. She glided down to the grave as noiselessly as she had walked through life: it is not by her sayings and doings that we know her, but by the fruits of holiness and peace which they produced.

The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, belonging to the Abbey, and near to which Augustine had been laid, was not finished and consecrated till seven years after the monastery had been completed. Then there was another grand day, and a large congregation of all classes, from the king to the lowest of his subjects. Three times the Archbishop struck the closed door, saying, "Peace be to them that enter in, and peace be to them that go out hence." Then the clergy in procession chanted the twenty-fourth psalm, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein." Then the Litany was

[8] About 300 years afterwards the monastery was re-dedicated, with much ceremony, by the celebrated Archbishop Dunstan, that the name of St. Augustine might be formally added to those of the Apostles.

sung, and the Archbishop invoked the blessing of God upon that congregation, and upon all who might thenceforward worship in that church.

"When the church had been consecrated, the remains of the late Archbishop, of Luidhard, and Queen Bertha, were removed from the place of their temporary interment to the north porch. We can imagine the feelings of Laurentius and of Ethelbert, as they took one more last look, as it were, upon what was mortal of him who first preached the Gospel to the Saxons, and of her whose eulogy it is that we know nothing of her history, except that, by her pious example and her domestic virtues, she prepared the way for the coming of our Lord". . . ."Only three years passed away and Laurentius again stood in the porch of that church to officiate at the funeral of the noble-hearted king to whom the Christianity of England is more indebted than to Augustine, or even to Gregory himself[9]."

It is thought that both Ethelbert and Bertha died at Reculver, the ancient Regulbium, where the king had built a new palace within the strong Roman fortress.

Ethelbert's death occurred on the 24th of February, 616. Standard historians differ with respect to the length of his reign, which may be accounted for by the fact that he was associated in the government during his father's life. One historian tells us

[9] From Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops."

that old Hermanric was living when Ethelbert married. Most likely the vigorous young prince was really the chief ruler of the kingdom for many years before the decease of his father; and as he was formally associated in the government, he probably bore the title of King—which, as we have seen, had a rather different meaning from that which we now attach to it; or at least, all that was intended to be expressed by it, was not as clearly defined then as now. We are repeatedly told that he reigned 56 years. Turner says he occupied the throne for more than half a century; and all agree in describing his reign as long and prosperous.

Ethelbert's conversion to Christianity appears to have been real conversion; we see its effect on his character and conduct, and we see it in the earnestness with which he did all in his power to establish and extend the Church—not by compelling his people to change their religion, but by persuading them, and by endowing institutions, and building sacred edifices, the parents of those which are blessings to us.

In a work written more than a hundred years ago, we read that Ethelbert was popularly called Albert by our ancestors, a statement to which interest attaches now that the name of Albert has again become dear to the English nation. The two names have the same signification, the one being but an abbreviation of the other[1].

[1] Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints."

Ethelbert had been instrumental in the conversion of his friend Redwald, King of East Anglia, who was elected to succeed him as Bretwalda. That monarch proved worthy of the honour conferred upon him, and gained a high reputation by his success in a war against that dreadful Ethelfrid, the usurper of Deiraland, the ravager of his neighbour's dominions, the destroyer of Bangor, and the murderer of the twelve hundred monks. When Redwald defeated and slew Ethelfrid, in a tremendous battle, all England rang with the praises of the victorious king who had crushed the cruel tyrant.

While the son and grandson of Ethelbert sat on the throne of Kent, four Italians successively occupied the archiepiscopal chair. Dr. Hook assures us "that the virtue of the Archbishops, their piety, their devotion and charity, were long remembered with gratitude; and although they committed errors, there is no record of any deviation from the strict laws of morality and religion. It was the common remark, that their lives were consistent, and that they practised what they taught. They imitated the course of life practised in the Primitive Church. They applied themselves to frequent prayer, watching, and fasting. They were indefatigable in preaching the word of truth. Contented with the mere necessaries of life, they showed a contempt for worldly possessions, and in their afflictions exhibited a patience which, at all times a virtue, was peculiarly attractive to the impulsive and undisciplined

heathens, violent in their passions, whether of joy or of grief. We are expressly informed, that by their simplicity of life, as well as by what Bede calls 'the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine' they attracted men to the cross of Christ.

"While they thus inculcated all the meek, lowly, and amiable virtues of the Christian profession, they were instructing the people in the arts of civilization. The Anglo-Saxons soon learned to excel all the Western nations in the fine arts; and we must attribute this, in a great measure, to the instruction they received from the Italian missionaries.

"The music of Canterbury, introduced by Honorius and Jacob the Deacon, was soon imitated even in the Celtic Churches; and the tendency of music to promote civilization while it aids devotion, will not be denied by ourselves, who, by the introduction of music in our national schools, are making England to become a musical nation[2].

"The Celtic Churches had not cultivated the sciences either of music or of architecture. A building formed of the trunks of oak-trees, covered with reeds, was sufficient for a bishop's Cathedral, and

[2] The Anglo-Saxons fully appreciated music, if we may judge by the words of old Bede: "Music is the most commendable, courtly, pleasing, mirthful, and lovely of the sciences. It makes a man cheerful, liberal, courteous, glad, amiable. It rouses him to battle, excites him to bear fatigue, comforts him in trouble, refreshes him when he is weary, and drives away ill-temper and melancholy."

if the reeds were removed and the roof covered with sheets of lead, it was regarded as magnificent. The Archbishops of Canterbury had erected a Cathedral of stone on the model of a Roman Basilica. There, in imitation of St. Peter's, as it at that time existed in Rome, the altar was erected, not at the east, but at the west end of the Church. At the east end was the apse, where stood Augustine's chair, in which each successive Archbishop sat, his clergy arranged in a semicircle on either side. It was the ancient form of the Eastern Church, not yet discarded in the West[3]."

"When the silver cross was borne before Honorius, almost the last survivor of the Italian mission, upon his taking his seat on the throne in the apse, there were some whose memory, passing over the long lapse of fifty years, would speak to their children of the time when they first saw the emblem of our salvation borne before the tall and dignified Augustine, taking possession of Stablegate. And when the voice of the Archbishop, in the trembling accents of extreme old age, pronounced the benediction, they would tell of the sweet voice of the young Honorius as he led the choir when they entered Canterbury, and by the melodious tones of music spoke to their hearts, before their minds were enlightened by the truth[4]."

And when Honorius was surrounded by children

[3] See note in Appendix on the dress of the Archbishops.

[4] From Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

in the schools, or on the commons where they assembled for their holidays, his own boyhood must have come back to him; he must sometimes have described the distant city in which he was brought up, and the Convent on the hill. He must sometimes have spoken of the great and good man whose happy genial disposition was like sunshine to himself and to those around him, though he was burdened with a heavy amount of responsibility, to the weight of which he was acutely sensitive, and though pain and weakness were continually trying him.

"Honorius was the last Italian Archbishop of the Anglo-Saxon Church. When he heard the Saviour's call, "Come unto Me," it was as music to his soul; and he joined his Master there, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Honorius died on the 30th of September, 653, and was buried at St. Augustine's, by the side of his friends and fellow-labourers, Augustine, Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus[5]."

The magnificent Cathedral of Canterbury memorializes the good and great of various races and of many generations; but none of them have stronger claims on our gratitude than have those first Archbishops, chosen from the band of missionaries sent by Gregory to our heathen ancestors.

Though the appearance of the Cathedral is very different now from what it was in their days,

[5] Hook.

yet it may remind us of them, as beautiful St. Martin's reminds us of Queen Bertha, and as St. Augustine's Missionary College reminds us of the monastery.

In the olden times, a strange feeling prevailed, which led people to think that they were doing honour to the dead when they removed their mortal remains to some spot which was thought grander or more sacred than their former resting-place. St. Augustine's bones have been repeatedly removed: in the twelfth century they were placed under the high altar at the east end of the Abbey church. Then, also, the remains of Ethelbert, Bertha, and Luidhard were removed from the porch, brought into the church, and laid in the transept, or apse, dedicated to St. Martin; thus still keeping up a recollection of the original connexion between the queen and the old French saint and the little church on the hill in which Bertha and Luidhard had so often worshipped together. Luidhard was laid on the north, Ethelbert and Bertha on the south side of the altar; and there, somewhere in the field around the ruins of the Abbey, their ashes still repose, and may possibly be discovered [6].

The sea-beaten cliff at Reculver, on which Ethelbert's palace stood, long disputed with St. Augustine's Abbey for the distinction of being the

[6] "Memorials of Canterbury," pp. 27, 28 of the second edition.

burial-place of the famous king. Down to the time of James I., a monument existed in Reculver Church,—a stone with this inscription: "Here lies Ethelbert, whilom King of Kent." It must have been put up on conjecture, at a time when the history of the early Saxon period was not as well known as it now is; or, possibly, the stone may have marked the grave of Ethelbert the Second.

All Canterbury pilgrims should visit Reculver,—it is well to take that excursion on a bright autumnal day, for there is in that part of the country a good deal of woodland, which is seen to advantage when the leaves are changing colour. And then the associations connected with what we have heard about departed centuries seem to harmonize with nature, when we feel that the present year is leaving us to join its predecessors of every age and period. It has dispensed the blessings with which it was charged, has filled our barns and store-houses, has even hung the hedges and bushes with red berries and feathery seed for the birds. Not one of God's creatures has been forgotten. And having done its work, the old year is peacefully passing away; bright are its latest leaves and lingering flowers.

And as a year speeds on its appointed course, fulfilling the will of Him who ordained times and seasons, so is it with a century, with a cycle, with the whole span of time, with the span of each mortal life.

Some such reflections as these may occur to

those who go from Canterbury to see the ruins at Reculver on a fine morning in October. Emerging from the woods, they come on an open level country, divided into large farms. The old-fashioned farmhouses, with their cheerful gardens full of chrysanthemums and China roses, look truly comfortable. You soon obtain views of the sea—tranquil views; no busy port is near, but in the distance a vessel may be discerned, bound perhaps to some haven thousands of miles away.

No one can fail to remark the tall twin towers which will guide him to the village on the cliff. Like the monks of old, you may stable there, and take advantage of the hospitality afforded by "the King Ethelbert," a most primitive little village inn. Its open door stands free to all, its windows peep through ivy leaves, and the swinging sign displays the name of that old Saxon king who held his court at Reculver.

Passing the inn, and some remarkably antiquated cottages, you come very abruptly on the edge of the cliff; for it has been falling and rolling under the lashing of the waves until the ruins and the signal towers, which used to be more than a mile from the edge, are now so near to it, that a sea wall is being laid to save them from destruction.

The descent to the shore down that rugged slope is easily accomplished, and repays the trouble, for the cliff presents a pleasing picture, the colouring is so good. The earth of which it is composed

is powerless to resist the strong towering waves, which often work here like battering rams; but in that yellow soil vegetation flourishes; and all the green things are rampant there, in happy unconsciousness of the danger of their position. They seem to cling to that old cliff with the mural crown, as the young should cling to the aged, with a love which enlivens desolation, conceals weakness, and covers over the vacant places. As you stand on the shore, looking up to the broken walls surmounted by those tall sister towers, dark clouds should gather over the scene, leaving just sunshine enough to gleam upon the sea-gull's wing, and to soothe old ocean into his "chameleon-like" mood.

Of course you will scramble up to see all that can be seen of king Ethelbert's palace. The northern wall of the massive fortress has been washed away, but the three other sides remain, overgrown by a gigantic ivy and a dwarf elder. Other trees grow among the ruins; some are stunted because their root-fibres are twining among Roman and Saxon remains.

The church built by Ethelbert stood close to the castle, and they wore away together until the beginning of the 15th century, when the church was restored by the Lady Margaret St. Clair as a memorial of her sister, Lady Isabel. Those orphan sisters, the nieces of an Abbot of St. Augustine's monastery, were most happily united in their lives, supporting each other through many sorrows which the Wars of the Roses brought upon English families.

They were on their way to visit a shrine of the Virgin at Broadstairs, when they were overtaken by a fearful tempest. The sisters were together in the storm, but the one was taken and the other left; and the survivor, seeking consolation in religious work, rebuilt the church on Ethelbert's foundations, and raised those sister towers to warn the mariner from the dangerous coast. The church is again in ruins, but the signal towers are maintained by Government for the purposes of navigation.

Looking round upon those hoary walls, all grey and mouldering with age, all tinged with the red Roman brick, the casual observer cannot distinguish the era to which each fragment belongs, though it is easy to see that labourers of successive ages have there left signs of their handiwork, from the tile of Severus to the broad arrow of our Board of Ordnance.

We look round with interest on the prospect which Queen Bertha looked upon from what we imagine to have been her happiest home,—that in which she lived after the conversion of her husband,—and we search for the ancient stones placed there to build up that home. But the course of events, which marked the days she lived in, seems to tell us more about her than the old stones at Reculver can tell. Those events must have more or less shaped the circumstances in which she was placed, must have occupied her thoughts, awakening hopes and fears, causing joy and sorrow, thus affecting her daily life while she

lived there as the wife and mother, as the Saxon lady and the queen. And those events were calculated to strengthen faith, to elevate hope, to enlarge charity, and thus to penetrate the surface, and touch the inner life which Bertha led there as a Christian woman, an heir of immortality. The impressions struck upon the hidden tablet of the soul may now seem indistinct and confused; but that kind of photography, beyond our human skill, is done by One whose eye cannot be dazzled, whose hand cannot tremble with a moment's hesitation. The features of individual character on each imperishable tablet will be brought out perfectly true to life, the very shades and colours that were given in time, fixed for eternity[7].

[7] The royal palace at Reculver was converted into a monastery about fifty years after King Ethelbert's death. One of the abbots was Brihtwald, afterwards the eighth Archbishop of Canterbury.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time:

"Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er Life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

"Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

LONGFELLOW.

IN conclusion, we will observe how Queen Bertha's son and daughters, the objects of her tenderest anxiety and affection, repaid the care bestowed on them by Christian parents. When Eadbald was released from paternal control by the death of his father, he went for a time far astray, allowing himself to be misled by an infidel party who were setting themselves in opposition to every thing connected with religion.

Eadbald had contracted a marriage agreeable to the laws and customs of his forefathers, but forbidden by the Christian Church; and he received the remonstrances of the Archbishop in an angry and rebellious spirit. We are glad to know that the bishops of the Anglican Church did not yield to the King of Kent, as the bishops of France had yielded to the Merovingian kings[1].

Perhaps Eadbald was incited to perverseness by the example of his young relatives, the sons of Sebert, who had jointly succeeded to the throne of Essex, on the death of their father. Those Saxon princes, being pagans at heart, overthrew the Christian religion, and drove the Italian bishop away from London; and the Saxons of Rochester became equally rebellious[2]. Both Mellitus and Justus lost hope and courage; they decided that it was better that they should go back to their own country, there to serve God in freedom, than that they should remain among a barbarous people who had returned to their heathen abominations.

After a time Eadbald listened to Laurentius, abandoned his evil courses, and, as far as we can judge, his repentance seems to have been sincere. He humbly begged the Archbishop of Canterbury to remain, and he recalled Mellitus and Justus. The latter was reinstated at Rochester; but Eadbald's authority did not extend so far as London,

[1] See note in Appendix.

[2] For a legend of Sebert, see note in Appendix.

therefore he could not place Mellitus again in the episcopal chair at St. Paul's; but, on the death of Laurentius, that bishop was raised to the see of Canterbury. The East Saxons relapsed into idolatry, and were finally converted by missionaries of the ancient British Church.

Eadbald, being repentant, and, we may hope, truly converted, carried on the good works inaugurated by his father, and ruled his kingdom prudently, to the satisfaction of his subjects.

This king restored the ancient church, and enlarged the fortress of Dover Castle. In the early part of the seventh century, a rough kind of Caen stone began to be used: it was found in the castle church, very unskilfully put together; and in this rude masonry, perhaps, we see the vestiges of Eadbald's work. "As regards the fortress, we have nothing left but the traditional lines, believed to have marked the principal Saxon works of which Dover Castle chiefly consisted previously to the greater works of Norman builders. It seems that the way of entering by Colton Gate has always remained the same, having afforded access successively to the Roman and Saxon fortress; and visitors, still winding their way up the chalk cutting, and under the Octagon Tower, are probably following the footsteps of Roman garrisons, British chiefs, Thanes and Churchmen of Saxon times, the forces of Earl Godwin, and many others of

earlier generations, till the Normans made their own approach to their statelier towers and keep[3]."

"Passing under the gateway, the space to the left, within the double line of defence, is described as the site of the primitive residences of the canons of King Eadbald's foundation, close to the church they had to serve. From thence, by a zigzag descent to the extreme angle on the cliff, under a tower long known as the Canon's Gate, they could hold communication with the town[4]."

Folkestone was a favourite place with King Eadbald, who frequently resided there. He had married a French princess, who brought up her family religiously. Their daughter, Eauswithe, was trained to religious life. The king built a large house for her, not far from where the parish church of Folkestone now stands; it is said to have been the first monastic retreat for women founded in this country.

King Eadbald died A.D. 640, after a reign of twenty-five winters, as the "Saxon Chronicle" expresses it. Although he went astray at one period of his life, yet we need not look upon him as an exception to the proverbial rule which is so seldom broken: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart

[3] "Church and Fortress of Dover Castle," by the Rev. John Puckle.

[4] Ibid.

from it[5]." He brought up his own son, ~~as it is~~, to be a zealous Christian: we read that King Ercombert caused all the idols that were left in the land to be broken to pieces, and all the heathen temples to be destroyed.

Ethelburga, the elder daughter of Ethelbert and Bertha, shortly after her father's death, married Edwin, king of Northumbria, and went forth from her native country to be the Bertha of the North.

The true story of her husband's life forms a perfect romance. We can but sketch it slightly here. Edwin was the son of that Alla, king of Deiraland, whose name struck the chords of Hallelujah on Gregory's tuneful mind. Alla died when his child was only three years old; and his ambitious neighbour, Ethelfrid, king of Bernicia, usurped the crown of Deira, and would have secured it to himself by putting the little boy to death, had not a faithful attendant contrived to carry him off to North Wales, where he was generously sheltered and brought up by Cadvan, the Celtic king of that country.

His own people supposed him to be dead, and Ethelfrid himself appears to have believed so for

[5] Eadbald's conversion was thought to have been miraculously brought about. See Appendix, note.

Dr. Hook relates the story, and remarks, "The conversion of Eadbald was a national event; and many stories would be afloat, which a credulous age would easily devise, if Laurentius and the monks were not sufficiently careful to prevent the circulation of the wondrous tale."

some years; but at length there was reason to fear that he had discovered his mistake, and might trace out the fugitive's hiding-place. And Edwin had had some disagreement with Cadwalla, the son of Cadvan; we do not know the particulars, but we see that jealousy was very likely to occur between two high-spirited youths of rival races, both of whom were strangers to the true religion, which restrains envy and other evil passions. The young Celtic heir and the exiled Saxon prince who lived on his father's bounty, could not be friends; and Edwin feared Ethelfrid, the blood-thirsty enemy, who, once aware of his existence, would do his utmost to put an end to it. So he left the rude Celtic palace among the mountains, in which he had spent his boyhood, and set out to wander from kingdom to kingdom, thinking thereby to elude the pursuit of his enemy, and thinking also that it might be well for him to become acquainted with the kings of the Heptarchy, among whom he might meet with some one who would be willing to assist him, should opportunity for so doing occur.

Although hospitably entertained wheresoever he went, according to the custom of the times, yet Edwin felt no confidence in those who thus far befriended him; he dared not disclose his real name, and feared to stay long any where, lest he should be discovered. The burden of his secret must have been the heaviest weight he had to bear as he journeyed on from place to place. But years afterwards, when he grasped the sceptre

instead of the traveller's staff, he thought of the wayfarers, and ordered that a cup of brass or iron, chained to a stake, should be fixed wherever the clear stream flowed near a path, that the weary traveller might conveniently refresh himself. These drinking vessels were set up all over the land; and, as long as Edwin reigned, no one dared to take away a cup; for the king was feared for his searching justice and honoured for his generous qualities.

After many wanderings, the royal exile arrived at the palace of the King of East Anglia, one of the largest and most important of the seven kingdoms: it included our present counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and part of Bedfordshire. Redwald was still an idolater, but he had great regard and esteem for Ethelbert, King of Kent, and was in some measure influenced by his friendly counsel and example.

He had sent messengers to Kent to intimate that he was willing to receive and protect teachers, exactly as many of the heathen chiefs who live on the borders of our colonies now do. In accordance with that desire, a few missionaries had been sent from St. Augustine's monastery to East Anglia, Paulinus, one of the Italians, being the head of the party; and they had formed a small mission station not far from the king's residence. Redwald's mind does not seem to have been awakened to religious feeling, nor does he appear to have cared to hold much intercourse with the missionaries; he had sent for them that they might teach his

people the useful arts, and bring with them those temporal advantages which even the heathen mind can appreciate.

Edwin was very cordially received by the King of East Anglia; and so pleasantly treated, that after a time reserve gave way, and he relieved his mind by confiding his secret to Redwald. That king expressed his sympathy and good-will; and he and Edwin entered into a mutual agreement to be friends and allies, to assist each other in any way that might be needful. The prince of Deira resided for some years at the Court of East Anglia: he even married a daughter of his protector; but she died not long after their early marriage, leaving him with two sons[6].

The King of Bernicia had, however, discovered his retreat. This perfidious enemy sent repeated messages to Redwald, offering him rewards if he would put Edwin out of the way. Finding that bribes had no effect, Ethelfrid tried the effect of threats; he declared that he would make war on the King of East Anglia and drive him from his throne, if he continued to protect the son of Alla.

Redwald became terrified, and hesitated. We can scarcely wonder at his irresolution, for Ethelfrid had made himself the terror of the land by his skilfulness and success in war, and by his horrible cruelty. Redwald might lose his crown and

[6] Montalembert. Bede does not mention Edwin's first wife, but tells us of his sons.

life, his own children might be reduced to the same desolate position in which Edwin stood, his country might be laid waste, hundreds of his subjects massacred—the sacrifice of one life might prevent these impending calamities.

He seems to have wished that Edwin should be aware of his danger, and should escape it by flight; for he did not conceal the matter from his wife, who had a great regard for the exiled prince, nor from a particular friend of Edwin's, known to be devotedly attached to him. There is also reason to suppose that he either informed the missionaries of the painful position in which he was placed, or at least took no care to prevent their becoming acquainted with it.

Edwin had no suspicion of what was hanging over him: brave and generous himself, he felt perfect confidence in those whom he trusted. Experience, indeed, had taught him that the few, not the many, are trustworthy; but his esteem and regard for Redwald were unbounded.

Edwin had retired for the night, and was preparing to go to bed, when a friend came and called him out of the house, informing him that his fate was the subject of discussion, and that his life might be sacrificed to secure the peace of the country; for Redwald was irresolute, and had not refused to comply with Ethelfrid's demands. And then the friend who thus warned him offered to fly with him to a place where they would be out of danger.

Edwin would not doubt Redwald; or, if his confidence was shaken, he felt that there was no faith and honour on earth, and therefore life was worthless. He thanked his friend; but, referring to the compact made between himself and Redwald, said that he would not be the first to break it by leaving his house clandestinely in a manner that seemed dishonourable. His friend still urged and argued in favour of flight; but Edwin said that he had wandered far enough, that he would defend his life with his sword, but that he would fly no further; adding, that, if he must die, he would rather receive the death-stroke from Redwald than from Ethelfrid. His friend, finding argument and entreaty of no avail, left him; perhaps he went to Redwald and told him how firmly the young man trusted in him, that there was no shaking his confidence. The queen, too, pleaded his cause with her husband, begging him not to betray a friend in distress, not to sacrifice his honour, "which," said she, "is more valuable than all other ornaments."

Edwin did not return to the house when his friend left him; he sat down on a stone seat at the palace gate. The uncertainty as to what his fate would be, and whether he was doing right in awaiting it at Redwald's Court, was awful. He dared not go back to his chamber, lest murderers should be hidden there. Pondering over his misfortunes, in anguish of spirit, he sat alone in the stillness and darkness of night in the place which he had chosen as being that in which he

could best defend himself, or escape by flight if attacked. He must have felt alarmed when his ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps, and then in the dim light he discerned a tall figure moving slowly towards him. As it drew near, he perceived it to be a person whose dress and countenance were strange to him, which excited his suspicions, but he thought it well to remain perfectly passive. As the unknown stepped close up to him, he was conscious that piercing black eyes were searching his own face; and when the mysterious intruder spoke, his accent was as strange as his appearance and manner. After a short salutation, he asked why the young man sat there at that hour of the night, when every one else was at rest. Edwin answered by inquiring how it could matter to a stranger, whether he passed the night in the house or in the open air?

The stranger said in reply, "Do not think that I am ignorant of the cause of your trouble; I know who you are, why you are grieving, and I know that your mind is oppressed with a dread of the evils which seem likely to befall you. But what if I assure you that Redwald will neither do you any harm himself, nor yet deliver you up to your enemy; will you be thankful for such an assurance, and grateful to him who bids you hope?" Edwin replied, that he should be thankful, and that he would show his gratitude in any way that he could.

"And if," said the stranger, "you are not only delivered from the dangers which now encompass

you, but are reinstated on your father's throne; and if you become greater and more powerful than any of your forefathers have been, holding the highest place among the kings of this land, subduing, and ruling over all around you, will you remember this night, and him who now puts the future before you?" The wondering Edwin again expressed his willingness to be grateful. "And," continued the mysterious visitor, "if what is now foretold shall come to pass, will you hereafter listen to your friendly prophet if he should recommend a course of life different from any ever followed by your family and your people—if he opens to you paths of glory in which your ancestors have never trodden, will you hear his advice and be guided by it?" The promise was readily, perhaps carelessly, made. Then the stranger laid his right hand on Edwin's head, saying, "When this sign shall be repeated, then remember this night, and what has passed between us, and the promises that you have made." Having thus spoken, he quickly disappeared.

Edwin was again alone; but the short interruption to his gloomy solitude had wrought a great revulsion of feeling, for he thought that he had seen a vision of happy augury; and that impression remained upon his mind even when daylight broke and showed the realities of a world in which he was a persecuted exile.

Early that morning he was greeted by the well-known voice of the friend who had warned him of his danger, who now came to tell him that the

peril was over; that he might compose his mind and lie down to rest, for Redwald had determined on protecting him.

The king had been awakened to a sense of honour, and incited to courage by his high-spirited wife and other advisers; and he had resolved to brave the vengeance of Ethelfrid, rather than to act treacherously, and violate the sacred laws of hospitality.

Aware of the position in which he had placed himself, and knowing how much depended on promptitude, Redwald mustered the largest army he could command, as quickly as possible, and made an unexpected attack upon Ethelfrid before he had collected his forces. A battle took place on the east bank of the river Idle (near Retford, in Nottinghamshire): the slaughter was so great that the little river was stained with blood. Redwald lost the chief captain of his army and an immense number of his soldiers, but Ethelfrid was defeated and slain, A.D. 617.

Ethelfrid left three sons—the eldest, who was fighting with him on the fatal field, and two much younger. They all fled to Scotland, and were protected by the king of that country. The two boys were converted to Christianity by Celtic missionaries, who exemplified the spirit of our holy religion by returning good for evil. They rejoiced in being permitted to show the way of eternal life to the sons of him who had wrought more death and destruction among them than any other Saxon conqueror had ever done.

Edwin greatly distinguished himself in the engagement which proved fatal to his enemy; and Redwald not only re-instated him in Deira, his father's kingdom, but also generously gave him Bernicia: the united kingdoms were called Northumbria.

Edwin had been trained in the school of adversity, which had improved his mind and disposition, though, as yet, his was only the character of a noble heathen. He was gifted with superior natural capacity and a clear perception of justice. The good order which he maintained throughout his kingdom was quite astonishing at a time when the neighbouring States were so lawless. He managed to execute the laws, which, as we have seen, was not usually accomplished at that early period. It became a common saying, that while King Edwin reigned, a traveller might carry any amount of money, or a woman might travel alone from one end of Northumbria to the other, without the least risk of being molested, which was thought to be saying a great deal in those days.

Such was the king who asked for Ethelburga, the Kentish princess, shortly after the death of her father. Eadbald made exactly the same stipulations, previously to his sister's marriage, as had been made in the case of their mother. Edwin not only promised that his queen should have freedom to follow her own religion, but also added that if, upon consideration, that religion should appear more excellent to himself and his nobles

than that of their forefathers, they might adopt it, and establish it in the kingdom of Northumbria. "Whereupon," says Bede, "the virgin was promised and sent to Edwin; and, pursuant to what had been agreed to, Paulinus, a man beloved of God, was ordained bishop to go with her, and by exhortations and by celebrating the heavenly mysteries, to confirm her and her company, lest they should be corrupted by the company of pagans[7]."

On this marriage Dr. Hook remarks, "Thus the princess bade farewell to her brother's Court, and started for the North to take possession of a throne; and Paulinus attended her, fully convinced that he should win his see. Nor may we omit to state that he was attended by Jacob the Deacon; for although the deacon was attached to the mission, that, as precentor, he might conduct the service of the royal chapel, and although Jacob may have lacked the powers necessary to elevate him to a higher station in the Church, yet he proved himself to be superior to the archbishop himself in the manly virtues which qualify the Christian to become a confessor or a martyr."

"Justus, Archbishop of Canterbury, communicated the prospects of this mission to the authorities at Rome. He seems to have requested letters from the Roman bishop to the King and Queen of Northumbria, and the letters came; they were, however, such as would scarcely be written in these days to

[7] Bede.

a New Zealand chief and his wife—condescending and common-place. Still worse were the presents which accompanied the letters; to wit, a shirt for Edwin with one gold ornament, and a garment of Ancyra (which Archdeacon Churton describes as a gabardine of strong cloth). To the queen he sent a silver looking-glass, and a gilt ivory comb. The letters were unanswered, and perhaps resented.

The realm of Edwin extended at this time from the northern shore of the Humber far into the lowlands of Scotland, into the Welsh country of Cumberland, and to the Islands of Man and Mona. The latter, which had been a stronghold of the Druids, and where they had hitherto continued to practise their superstitious rites, received a new name from its Teutonic masters, and was thenceforth called Angles Eye, or Anglesea. So proud was Edwin, that banners, we are told by Bede, were borne before him, not only in time of war, but also in time of peace. He adopted an old Roman ensign—the globe on a spear, which signified a world in subjection; and this was carried before him when he walked or rode through his cities, towns, and provinces[8].

"Such a person was not to be treated as a mere barbarian; and the letters from Rome could only retard the success of Paulinus.

"As in the case of Ethelbert, Edwin, though

[8] Sometimes a bunch of feathers fixed on a pole was borne before the great king.

prepared to embrace Christianity himself, could not take any step for the conversion of the nation without the consent of his witan; and even then it would be doubtful whether the decision of the king and his wise men would be accepted by his people. He was silent, serious, and reserved, passing hour after hour in moody meditation, not knowing what to do. He permitted Paulinus to preach, and Jacob to charm the people by the music of the church: he ceased himself from worshipping idols; but he was a statesman, a warrior, a king, and he dared not yet profess himself a Christian. Paulinus watched the king, he conversed with him, he exhorted him to declare himself, and to take the necessary steps for the conversion of the people. But the policy of the prince did not yield to the enthusiasm of the prelate[9]."

Edwin had held the power and dignity of Bretwalda since the death of Redwald, which occurred in 623. That King of East Anglia had never become a truly converted man, though he had invited and protected a few missionaries from Kent, and had been baptized; yet, soon afterwards, by the persuasion of his wife and nobles, who preferred the religion in which they had been brought up, he was induced to re-open the heathen temples. But, wishing to conciliate both parties, he had introduced the furniture and vessels used in Christian churches into his heathen places of worship.

[9] From Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops."

There was a natural elevation of mind, a love of consistency, in Edwin's character, which rendered him incapable of thus attempting to act a double part. The power and dignity to which he had attained, and the religious perplexities which really harassed his reflective mind, must sometimes have reminded him of that night of awful suspense; for the prediction was being verified. He was more powerful than any of his family had ever been: he was Bretwalda, and even receiving a kind of tribute from the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, "which was paid by all except the men of Kent alone," says Ingulph's "Saxon Chronicle [1]." And certainly a new way of life was the before him, and advice was given to him such as had never been put before his ancestors. We may suppose that he now and then spoke of that vision to Ethelburga, and we can follow the thoughts of the Christian wife, as she pondered over it, her own mind not free from the superstition which universally prevailed at that time.

The high position in which Edwin stood, and the pride with which he maintained it, excited the envy and animosity of the base and mean-spirited. Quichelm, King of the West Saxons, hated the King of Northumbria. On Easter Sunday, in the year following that in which Edwin's marriage had taken place, as he sat

[1] "Edwin with great power commanded all the nations, as well of the English as of the Britons, except only the people of Kent."—*Bede*, book ii. ch. v.

in the hall, surrounded by his family and attendants, an ambassador from King Quichelm was announced. The man was allowed to enter, and, coming close up to the king, began to deliver the message with which he was charged; but, when all eyes were fixed upon his countenance, he quickly drew a two-edged sword from under his cloak. Lilla, the faithful thane, not having a buckler at hand, sprang up and interposed himself between the weapon and the king. He was run through in an instant; and the sharp point of the sword which pierced his body, wounded the king also, so forcible was the stroke. The wound was slight, but caused anxiety, as the weapon had been poisoned. The bold assassin was cut to pieces by the attendants.

This occurrence greatly disturbed the king, the queen was exceedingly agitated; and, in the night which followed that exciting day, Ethelburga's first child was born. When Edwin received the news of his daughter's birth, he felt very grateful, and openly gave thanks to the gods for these deliverances from imminent danger. Paulinus, who was with him, endeavoured to persuade him that his thanks and praises should be given to the God of heaven. He told the king that he had deeply felt for him and the queen when he saw them plunged into this great distress, that he had prayed earnestly on their behalf; and he added, "I cannot but think that this mercy is partly owing to my earnest prayers. I must give hearty thanks to Christ my Lord." Edwin then asked Paulinus if

he would pray for his success against the cowardly traitor who had sent the assassin to take away his life. The answer was, "Yes; but I fear that Jesus will not hear you unless you resolve on becoming His disciple[2]." The king made a sort of promise that he would embrace Christianity if he returned from the impending war; and he gave his infant daughter to the Christian Church as a kind of pledge. Paulinus baptized her, by the name of Eanfleda, on the following Whit Sunday. She was the first Christian of the Northumbrian race, but twelve of the king's household were baptized on the same day.

"Edwin marched against Quichelm, and succeeded in killing or capturing all who had been in any way concerned in the late attempt on his life. But when he returned victorious to his home, the force of early prepossessions rallied, and he declared himself unable to renounce heathenism until he had consulted further with his subjects, and considered the matter more himself.

"One day, the bishop had an interview with the king; Edwin was still undecided as to the course he would take. Paulinus approached the wavering monarch. He was not seated now on the cold stone in the dead of night, but reclined upon his chair of state, with all the paraphernalia of royalty around him. Paulinus laid his hand gently upon the king's head, as if he were still a youth, and asked him whether he

[2] Soames's "Anglo-Saxon Church."

knew that sign. It was the feather that broke the camel's back. With the uncontrollable vehemence which impels the undisciplined mind to rush from one extreme to another, the king was ready to prostrate himself before Paulinus, and yielded to his suggestion that he should convene his witan."

Dr. Hook, who tells this story, says there can be little doubt that the mysterious stranger who intruded upon Edwin's solitude on that memorable night, was Paulinus himself, who was then on the mission-station in East Anglia. "Paulinus was consistent from first to last in the error, which ultimately involved him in ruin, of regarding temporal success as an evidence of the truth of his religion."

"The Witenagemot was held. The account of its proceedings is preserved in Bede, and is deeply interesting as the earliest report in existence of a parliamentary debate. The first speaker was Coifi, the chief priest of the Northumbrians. His speech was to this effect:—

"'O king, consider what this is which is now preached to us; for I verily declare to you that, as to my own experience, the religion which we have hitherto professed has no power nor utility in it. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many who receive greater favours and higher honours from you than I do, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now, if the gods were good for any thing, they would rather assist me, who have been most careful to serve

them. If, therefore, upon examination, you find these new doctrines which are preached to us better and more efficacious, it only remains for us immediately to receive them without any delay.'

"This speech is of much importance, since it enables us to account for the subsequent renunciation of Christianity, which was as sudden and complete as its reception. Paulinus had made a grand mistake by encouraging Edwin, Coifi, and the other converts, to believe that the merits of a religious scheme were to be tried by the temporal advantages which followed its reception. Success in battle, the attainment of political power, the acquisition of wealth,—these were the rewards held out by Paulinus, from his first interview with Edwin at the palace gate of Redwald, until his late victory over the West Saxons and Quichelm their king. Edwin at that time promised to embrace the Christian faith if he obtained a victory, and the victory was claimed by Paulinus as an evidence of Christianity. We perceive the effects of his teaching in the speech of Coifi, who had evidently conferred with the archbishop; and we shall see hereafter that the overthrow of Christianity in Northumbria is attributable to this error, one into which enthusiasts have frequently fallen.

"We are gratified by the wiser speech of one of the witan, who may be regarded as the representative of those who are converts from higher motives, and who are found faithful when the time of trial comes :—

"'The present life of man upon earth, O king! seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like the swift flight of a sparrow through the hall wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your ealdormen and thanes, a good fire having been lit in the midst, and the hall made warm thereby, while storms of rain and snow rage abroad: the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door and immediately out at another—whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space he vanishes out of your sight into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space; but of what went before, or of what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed.' The other rulers and king's counsellors spoke to the same effect.

"On the motion of Coifi, Paulinus was introduced. There he stood; the lofty stature slightly bending, the dark eye flashing, the black hair curling round his bald head, the slender aquiline nose, the thin spare countenance, the dignified and venerable appearance of the civilized Italian contrasting with the long flowing flaxen locks, the round weather-beaten faces, and the robust forms of the rude warrior-counsellors of the Anglo-Saxon king. The foreign accent of one who had troubled himself to learn their language, and who addressed them in their native tongue, secured attention, when, in the spirit, if not in the words of Paul and Barnabas at

Iconium, he preached that they should turn from their vanities 'unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.'

"When the sermon was finished, Coifi rose again, and addressed the witan: 'I have long since been sensible that that which we worshipped was nothing; because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it. But now I openly confess that such truth evidently appears to me in this preaching, as can confer on us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness. For which reason I advise, O king! that we instantly abjure and set fire to those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them.'

"The king declared himself a believer; but it was doubtful even yet how far the people would ratify the decision of the witan. He consulted the converted Coifi. Coifi felt that no one was so well qualified as himself to strike the first blow at idolatry and its temple. He determined to proceed to the chief temple of the Northumbrian kingdom, Godmundham (that name meant the house protected by the gods), and the name was attractive to him [3]. He felt, and he knew that the people would feel, that if the gods could not protect the place to which it was professed that their protection espe-

[3] Near Market Weighton, in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

cially extended, they were no longer to be accounted as gods.

"In this conclusion Coifi showed his consistency, but it was consistency in error. It was not lawful for the pagan priests among the Saxons to bear arms, or to ride on a horse; so the people of York thought Coifi mad, as they saw him mount the king's own war-horse, girded with a sword, and brandishing a spear. The same impression was made as he passed on through the country attended by his followers. Attention was attracted to his proceedings, and as he approached Godmundham, the multitude were awed into silence. They saw him drawing near to the temple; he hurled his spear and fixed it fast in the temple-wall, and when they beheld his followers setting fire to the fane of their impotent gods, they themselves took courage, and abolished pagan worship in Northumbria. Meanwhile, a small church of timber was rising at York, the humble foundation of the magnificent minster, in which now stands the throne of an archbishop who equals Paulinus in scriptural knowledge and Christian virtue, and excels him in simplicity of character and purity of doctrine. King Edwin fixed the archiepiscopal see at York, and he was baptized there on Easter Day, 627[4]."

Easter was a very joyful season in the early Christian days, for then all those wanderers in the wilderness of heathenism who had been sought and

[4] From Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops."

found, and brought into the Great Shepherd's fold during the course of the preceding year, were clothed in their baptismal garments, and joined in the services and catechizings in the churches, and in the festivities, which lasted for eight days. The free-born and the slaves equally participated in the gladness of the holy happy season; and the lately ransomed assembled in the churches to offer special united thanksgiving for their liberation. In rural districts where there were no churches, immense congregations assembled in the open air, and in the streams and rivers the new converts were baptized. The evil one looked upon that "peace on earth," and was permitted to consider it, and to disturb it. Such a contention arose as to the correct time for keeping Easter that "the *when* marred the *how*," as old Fuller says[5].

Bede tells us that Edwin and Ethelburga had other children besides the daughter already mentioned, but the first two of these were snatched out of this life while they were yet in their white garments, and buried in the church at York. Many noble and illustrious persons were also baptized. So great was then the fervour of the faith, that Paulinus, at a certain time, coming with the king and queen to the royal country seat which is called Adgefrin, stayed there with them thirty-six days, fully occupied in catechizing and baptizing; during which days he did nothing else but instruct the

[5] See note in Appendix, on the time for keeping Easter.

people resorting from all villages and surrounding places, and he baptized them in the river Glen, which is close by. These things happened in the province of Bernicia [6].

Bede goes on to tell us that, in the province of Deira also, where Paulinus was wont to be with the king, he baptized in the river Swale, which runs by the village of Cataract, for as yet oratories and fonts could not be made in the early infancy of the Church in those parts [7].

It is easy to see how the description of these baptisms in Northumberland has been mixed up with that of the ten thousand in the Swale of Kent, and thus mistakes have arisen. We can also understand why we have a more detailed account of the conversion of Northumbria than of any other kingdom of the Heptarchy. In the interesting narratives of Bede a prominence is naturally given to the affairs and local traditions of his own country, and to the men who had been personally known to those whom he knew. Jarrow, near Wearmouth, in the present county of Durham, was the birth-place of the honest old monk who laid the foundations of English history. King Edwin commenced a stone church at York which enclosed the wooden building in which he had been baptized; but at that time the royal city was on the Derwent,

[6] At Yeverin in Glendale, near Wooler, in Northumberland. The Glen is the same as the Bowent.

[7] Bede. Bohn's edition.

seven or eight miles from York. A little village stands there now, called Alby (the old habitation), and near to it are the ruins of a very ancient castle[8].

But King Edwin often held an ambulatory Court, moving from place to place to administer justice and to receive the rents of his estate (the sovereign's privy purse). These rents were all paid in kind, and by them the royal household was supported. As we have seen, Paulinus accompanied the king on these circuits, and spiritual daily bread was given to the people in exchange for that which nourishes the body. Paulinus bore the gospel tidings into the province of Lindsay (now Lincolnshire); he converted the governor of the city of Lincoln, and built a church there, and in that sacred edifice he consecrated Honorius, the last Italian Archbishop of Canterbury. Bede was well acquainted with persons who had known the first converts who were baptized in the Trent (near Southwell in Nottinghamshire), in the presence of King Edwin and the members of his Court. "Paulinus," says Bede, "had also with him in the ministry James the Deacon, a man of great zeal and fame in Christ's Church, who lived even to our days."

It is pleasant to read the venerable historian's tribute of respect to James or Jacob the Deacon, the last survivor of the Italian mission, one of Gregory's own chorister boys, who laboured and died

[8] Not far from Stamford Bridge.

among the Angles of Deira, remaining with them through dark days of danger and depression.

For the tranquillity of Northumbria was not to last long. A disagreement occurred between Edwin and Cadwalla, King of North Wales; the particulars are not recorded, but it seems as if Cadwalla were the chief aggressor, as he made the first attack. Edwin was successful in the beginning of this war, as he had been in others; he pursued Cadwalla into Wales, and drove him into Ireland. He appears to have quite forgotten that his adversary was the son of King Cadvan, who had been the kind protector of his own hapless childhood.

Cadwalla was as proud as Edwin; Bede tells us that his golden sceptre was worth sixty cows. His victories revived the glory of the Celt; he was one of the Welsh heroes whose very names were so terrible to Edward the First, that, to bury them in oblivion, he inhumanly massacred the Bards. It was thus that they sung of Cadwalla to the music of their harps:

"Fourteen great battles he fought
For Britain, the most beautiful,
And sixty skirmishes.

"Cadwalla encamp'd on the Yddon,
The fierce affliction of his foes,
The lion prosperous against the Saxon.

"He led the band of slaughter in the breach;
Eagerly he pursued the conflict;
Stubborn in a hundred battles,
A hundred castles he threw down.

As the waters flow from the fountain,
So will our sorrow through the lingering day
Flow on for thee, Cadwalla[9]."

Edwin was more than a match for this terrible Cadwalla. But when the Welsh king made an alliance with Penda, so that the strength of North Wales and Mercia united, it overpowered Northumbria; and at the fatal battle of Hatfield Chase, in the neighbourhood of Doncaster, the noble Edwin lost his kingdom and his life. "With him fell the unstable edifice of Christianity which Paulinus had planted in the North of England. In Church and State the desolation of Northumbria was frightful.

"Penda the Pagan hated both the people and their God. He spared neither man, woman, nor child: to convert the once flourishing region into a pathless desert, was his avowed object and delight. His ally, Cadwalla, was indeed nominally a Christian; but history has too often to lament the extinction of Christian charity under the deadening fury of sectarian zeal. Cadwalla would not intercede in behalf of Christians who differed from him on the subject of baptism, in the cut of the hair, and on the day of observing Easter[1]."

Edwin's life ended thus suddenly in less than seven years after his baptism, and in

[9] From Welsh Archives. See Turner's Anglo-Saxons.

[1] "Lives of the Archbishops."

the eighteenth year of his reign. His head was brought into York, and buried in St. Peter's Church, which he had founded. The two sons by his first marriage were both cut off with him; one fell on the battle-field, the other was taken prisoner and put to death by Penda. A Northumbrian nobleman conveyed the widowed queen and her children through swarms of savage enemies to the sea-coast, put them on board ship, and carried them safely to Kent; Paulinus also escorted the royal fugitives. They were affectionately received by the king and Archbishop Honorius, who heartily sympathized with Ethelburga in her sorrow[2]. Eadbald gave up a portion of his royal chase on the southern hills; and there, by his sister's wish, he built a large monastery for her, then thought very magnificent; and near it a church was erected, which is still the parish church of the little village of Lyminge, not far from Hythe, to the south of the Roman road called Watling-street, which led from Dover to London. Ethelburga's church seems to have been built above some chamber floors belonging to a former Roman station at Lyminge. A broken fragment of a small column was found there, which had evidently supported part of a Roman

[2] The fugitives carried with them many of King Edwin's rich goods, and a golden cross and chalice, which were long preserved in Canterbury Cathedral.

house, and that fragment exactly corresponded with some of the material found in Dover Castle Church [3].

"Paulinus did not return to Northumbria: on the death of the Bishop of Rochester, he accepted the vacant see. The anarchy and confusion which prevailed in the North were very dreadful; and, unhappily, the teaching of Paulinus had not been such as was most calculated to strengthen his converts against the time of trial. What could men who were actuated by Coifi's principles think about that fatal overthrow at Hatfield Chase?

"But all the Christians in Northumbria were not like Coifi; some there were, like the good thane, who based their faith on higher grounds than those too often inconsiderately taken by Paulinus. They, amid the general falling off, continued faithful; and Jacob the Deacon laboured earnestly with a sympathetic heart to encourage them in their resolution to risk their lives, rather than to deny Him who died for them. And there were martyrs

[3] "The foundation of the parish church at Lyminge can be pretty authentically settled by documentary evidence, as a work of the reign of Eadbald of Kent, on behalf of the religious house over which his sister Ethelburga was to preside. Unlike as it looks in these days to the remains of a royal foundation, there can be little doubt of the primitive identity of certain portions of this fabric, especially in the chancel and along the south side of the church."—"*Church and Fortress of Dover Castle*," *by the Rev. John Puckle.*

in those days whose names are in the Book of Life, though they have not come down to us[4]."

Jacob was not called away, but he was strengthened for his work on earth; and when we read of the quieter times which followed, we find him teaching the superior music of Italy and Kent, the music of his own beloved master, to the congregations in the Celtic churches of Northumbria. For at length prosperity was restored to that kingdom by the sons of Ethelfrid. The eldest was a pagan like his father, but his character was superior; he can hardly be said to have reigned, as Cadwalla continued to ravage the country, determined to extirpate all the race of the Angles. When Northumbria had been cruelly devastated for more than a year, Eanfrid, its nominal king, went with twelve of his warriors to sue for peace. They were all put to death by the Welsh king, who called himself a Christian, and thought himself the hero of his times.

Cadwalla despised Oswald, the brother of the murdered Eanfrid, and made no preparation to resist him.

Oswald came from Scotland, where he had been brought up since he was twelve years old; he was accompanied by a small band of Scotchmen who had attached themselves to him; and many of the earls and thanes of Northumbria joined his standard, impatient to put an end to the anarchy which

4 "Lives of the Archbishops."

had prevailed since Edwin's death. The armies met not very far from Hexham, near the Picts' Wall.

It is said, that, on the evening before the battle, Oswald made a large rough cross of wood, planted it firmly with his own hands, and then called the Christian soldiers to gather round it for united prayer. Bede and several old chroniclers relate that incident; but as they go on to tell us how in after ages wonderful miracles were wrought by the chips of the wood of St. Oswald's cross, and even by the grey moss that gathered upon it, we do not know how far to believe the story. It is certain that a great battle took place, that Oswald gained Northumbria, and that Cadwalla was slain. It is certain also that, as a thank-offering, the conqueror built the splendid abbey of Lindisfarne, on Holy Island, where he fixed the archiepiscopal see. The new king removed it from York, as he naturally preferred the Celtic Church, and desired to be independent of Canterbury. Aidan, the first Bishop of Lindisfarne, who came from Iona, was a man of uncommon merit. Finan and Colman followed; and it was under these prelates of the old British Church, that the North of England was evangelized.

And King Oswald, the son of Ethelfrid, was distinguished by the gentle virtues, and by the Christian graces of humility and charity. He finished the stone church at York which Edwin had commenced, and did all that he could towards promoting holiness and peace. But it seems to

have been hardly possible for a brave man to die a natural death in those days. Oswald was mortally wounded in battle, at a place since called Oswestry in Shropshire, fighting against Penda, King of Mercia. He breathed his last sigh in prayer for himself and his dying soldiers. He had reigned nine years, and was succeeded by his younger brother, Oswy. That king, soon after his accession, married the first Northumbrian Christian, Eanfleda, the eldest daughter of Edwin and Ethelburga.

Eanfleda would not abandon the Kentish customs in which she had been educated, and Oswy for a time was firm to the opinions in which he had been brought up; and so Easter was actually celebrated on different days by two parties at the Court of Northumbria. But after a time the king gave way, and they agreed to keep the festival at one time, according to the reckoning by which we all keep it now; and when that difference ceased to exist, less important ones soon vanished away.

Probably, this triumph of the Roman party involved little or no change in the articles of belief, if we except prayers and offerings for the dead; we have indeed no sufficient evidence that Papal peculiarities of doctrine were then established [5].

The widowed Ethelburga survived Eanfleda's marriage for some years. We can imagine the feeling with which she sent her daughter forth to

[5] Soames.

occupy the position which had been her own,—to be Queen of Northumbria; and how anxiously she looked for news, brought irregularly, and sometimes by chance messengers, from that distant land, as it must then have seemed, while she pursued the quiet routine of monastic life at Lyminge. She sent her two sons to complete their education in France, under the superintendence of their relative, King Dagobert; but they both died young.

Ethelburga's secluded home, in which she presided over a community of widows, was pleasantly situated on a hill-side overlooking a spacious valley enclosed by lofty eminences. It was within ten miles of Folkestone, where her brother, King Eadbald, spent much of his time, and where her niece, Eanswithe, presided over an institution somewhat similar to her own. These royal recluses so lived as to bring, not only themselves, but also the vocation they had chosen, into high repute. Eanswithe's Abbey and its church were dedicated to St. Peter. They stood on a dangerous height above the ocean, and were both washed into the sea in less than two hundred years after they were erected; but when the falling of the cliff was perceived to be inevitable, a new church was built, called St. Mary's, to which the bones of the celebrated abbess were removed. No doubt they were looked upon with superstitious reverence, for before that time, though long after Eanswithe's decease, her name had been brought before the rulers of the Church of Rome, as that of a candidate for canoni

zation; she had been deemed worthy of that honour, and her story had been liberally embellished with legends, some of which are still remembered at Folkestone. A second nunnery was built there not far from the second church; it was destroyed by the Danes, rebuilt by the Normans, and again washed into the sea before the close of the thirteenth century. But the fine old church of SS. Mary and Eanswithe, which has been repeatedly restored, still maintains its conspicuous position. Standing above the rapidly-growing town, the busy harbour, and the wide English channel, it is a striking object as seen from the surrounding hills or from the sea. The venerable tower bids a lingering farewell to those who are leaving our shores, and welcomes the homeward bound[6].

It is thought that Ethelburga rests at Lyminge, in the place of honour belonging to the foundress; but of this we have no positive proof. If the meadow-land round Lyminge church were excavated, we should very likely find her tomb somewhere to the left of the site of the high altar. The ground there evidently teems with ruins. The grave-stone is hidden, and the name may be obliterated; but on the more durable page of history we still can read these words, "All that we know of Ethelburga gives us wholesome thoughts[7]."

[6] Hasted tells us that, in the seventeenth century, a stone coffin, containing the mortal remains of St. Eanswithe, was accidentally found beneath the church.

[7] "Lives of the English Saints."

Eadba, the sister of Eadbald and Ethelburga, the younger daughter of Ethelbert and Bertha, lived and died as the abbess of a monastery at Minster in the Isle of Thanet. She is mentioned by only one of the old historians, who simply gives us that information respecting her.

Mildred was another sainted member of that royal family, one of King Eadbald's grand-daughters. She was educated in France, and must have been rather advanced in life when Archbishop Theodore consecrated her abbess of a monastery at Minster; whether it was the same which Eadba had presided over, or another, is not made clear; but we are told, "There she ruled seventy chosen virgins." Mildred died towards the close of the seventh century, of a painful lingering illness, which she bore with uncommon fortitude and patience.

After her death, the monastery was attacked by the Danes; therefore monks instead of nuns were placed there, to resist the cruel, insatiable invaders. But, standing in a position exposed to danger, the abbey was repeatedly plundered and burned: it lost its importance, and at last King Canute suppressed it, but bestowed all its endowments on St. Augustine's monastery. There were a few monks of Minster who still loved their desolated home, and they determined to stay, to cherish old associations, and to guard St. Mildred's bones. So, when the monks of Canterbury came to carry away the stone coffin which they considered the most precious and most important item of the endowments

transferred by the king's decree, the monks of Minster stoutly resisted. A fight ensued, and the monks of Canterbury, being hotly pursued, with great difficulty succeeded in crossing the river with their heavy burden, which they conveyed safely to St. Augustine's Abbey. A church in Canterbury, and two in London, bear the name of St. Mildred.

As we made acquaintance with Radigund, and looked into her monastery, we shall not form a dismal idea of the life led by those princesses of Kent who ruled large houses, peaceful homes for the multitude of bereaved women and children, or educational establishments for the advancement of the upper classes. Each convent contained chambers fit for noble and royal visitors; in each there was a refuge for the destitute and another for poor wayfarers; but perhaps the good that was done out of doors to the ignorant people who dwelt around, was greater than that done within the convent walls.

We are told that the conventual dress of the Anglo-Saxon era differed in no respect from the female costume generally worn, and the pictures of that period show us that an abbess might be splendidly dressed; for instance, one who was by birth a princess of East Anglia is represented as attired in an embroidered scarlet mantle over a tunic or gown of gold tissue, while the veil and shoes are of the same costly material.

We also read of a lady abbess who appeared in a scarlet tunic with full skirts, wide sleeves, and

hood, over an under-vest of fine linen of a violet colour. Her face was painted, her hair curled with irons over the forehead and temples; she wore a gold necklace and bracelets, and rings of precious stones, and her nails were pared to resemble the talons of a falcon. In stricter convents, a more sober style of dress was adopted; but that was at one time the dress of a fashionable, high-born abbess. Those princesses of Kent, Ethelburga, Eadba, Mildred, and Eanswithe, being the first Anglo-Saxon royal abbesses, were probably more simple and primitive in their attire; but the fact that such excess could be committed, proves that no rules with regard to dress could have been instituted.

Double monasteries were very common in those early times. Dr. Hook thus explains how they originated: he says, "When a lady had selected her residence, and surrounded herself with a sisterhood, and established a nunnery, she required her domain to be cultivated to meet their wants; and for the conversion, or the religious instruction of her tenants and labourers, she had to make provision. A church was accordingly erected; and to serve the church, as well as to instruct the people, clergy and monks were required: they lived together, and so a monastery was formed, the convents both for the men and women being under the direction of the lady of the manor, who constituted herself the abbess. The celebrated monastery at Whitby over which St. Hilda presided, was a double

monastery. We have authority for saying that some of these establishments answered the purpose for which they were intended, and were for a time the abodes of virtue and religion; but it is easy to see how liable they were to abuse and corruption in a rude age, as soon as the first fervour of enthusiastic piety subsided."

We have now traced out all that is known of that King and Queen of Kent, and their children. About two hundred years after Ethelbert's death, his little kingdom was incorporated into the larger kingdom of England; and it now forms but a fraction of the empire of Great Britain. Yet Ethelbert and Bertha are not, and will not be forgotten [8].

The walls of our magnificent new palace at Westminster are adorned with illustrations of our country's story; and there "The baptism of Ethelbert" occupies the place of highest honour immediately over the throne [9].

The light is very much subdued, lest grandeur should be lost in glare; it is so tempered that it does not bring out all the details of the picture, and we look upon it with much the same feeling as that with

[8] Egbert, King of Wessex, being both fortunate as a warrior and prudent as a politician, effected what many princes had vainly attempted. He united the seven kingdoms, A.D. 827, and the name of Angle-land, which had long been applied to the States under the Bretwalda, was then given to the consolidated kingdom by a decree of the Witenagemot.

[9] The fresco is by Dyce.

which we read the interesting narrative to which the fresco refers, wishing that more light could be thrown upon the subject. But we see the picture clearly enough to discern all the meaning which it should convey.

Four figures are prominent: Augustine, Ethelbert, an earl in waiting, who is respectfully removing the king's cloak as he kneels beside the font, and Queen Bertha. These figures represent the rulers of the Church and State, and the people who are ruled. To the left is a group of ladies. The queen's face is turned from us, as she looks down on her husband; but we distinguish her by the purple dress, and remember that woman's part, though it should be unobtrusive, is not unimportant. In the background is a crowd of spectators: several women are holding children up to look on the scene—a happy thought, as they remind us that the blessings brought by the introduction of Christianity have descended, and will descend to the children yet unborn.

But the noblest and most appropriate memorial which England possesses of Gregory, Augustine, Ethelbert, and others who helped to lay the foundations of her Church, is St. Augustine's College. There the ashes of the dead repose, surrounded by fragments of the old abbey, and by new walls built upon old foundations. There young missionaries are trained as they were trained by Gregory the Great, inured to hardships, accustomed to live simply, brought up to be skilful with head and

hand, taught all kinds of useful knowledge and all sorts of manual work, that they may instruct the heathen, as those first missionaries instructed our ancestors. That is the house in which the converts from heathen lands are received and educated. The sons of several powerful chiefs have lately been sent back to their native lands to evangelize and civilize their people, and others have taken their places; an addition has been made to the building for their especial accommodation. The college has been so recently established, that as yet all the Augustinians distributed over the world are in the vigour of life, devoting the fulness of their strength to the noblest cause; but they remember their college with affection, as we gather from their interesting letters, and they love to stir up the spirit of enterprise, to encourage their old comrades and the younger students, to keep up the feeling that they are fellow-soldiers of one band, which bears a distinguished name. They call to each other, as it were, from their far-off stations, saying,

> "Let us then be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate [1]."

What different men, belonging to different ages, have passed for the last time through that venerable gateway of the old monastery, having taken

[1] The letters from men working in many lands are printed in a small periodical, called "Occasional Papers from St. Augustine's College."

leave of their friends, to set out on some distant mission, as Augustine and his companions departed from the convent on the Cælian Hill! We cannot name or number them: many are resting, a few are labouring, very widely scattered: each will stand in his lot at the end of the days, with those whom he has brought to Christ, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever[2]."

[2] Dan. xii. 3—13.

APPENDIX.

NOTE I. p. 6.

ON OUR EARLIEST HISTORIANS.

IT appears that during the earliest period of our history, Literature flourished to a surprising extent, considering the generally rude condition of the people. "It was chiefly cultivated by individuals of the religious orders, a few of whom can easily be discerned through their obscure biography to have been men of no mean genius[1]." The first name we meet with on the list of writers is that of Gildas, who lived in the former half of the sixth century, when the whole island was convulsed in the agonies of savage warfare, while the kingdoms of the Heptarchy were forming. "Owing to the obscurity of this portion of our annals, it has been the somewhat extraordinary fate of Gildas to be represented, first, as flourishing at two different periods, more than a century distant from each other; then as two different men of the same name, living at different times; and, finally, as no man at all; for his very exist-

[1] See "Biographia Britanniæ Literaria:" Anglo-Saxon Period. By Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

ence is now doubted..... The first unquestioned British author of distinction is St. Columbanus, a native of Ireland, and a man of vigorous ability, who contributed greatly to the advancement of Christianity in various parts of Western Europe, and died A.D. 615. .... A few names of inferior note bring down the list of Anglo-Saxon historians to the venerable Bede, who may be allowed to stand at the head of the class. ..... Our subsequent literary history is formed of comparatively obscure names, until it presents to us the enlightened and amiable King Alfred the Great, in whom learning and authorship graced the royal state, without interfering with its proper duties[2]."

NOTE II. p. 7.

GILDAS DIED AT GLASTONBURY.

Glastonbury was a stronghold of the ancient British Church. Christianity is said to have been planted there in the earliest ages. The legends concerning Glastonbury begin with Joseph of Arimathea, by whom the Abbey is said to have been founded. Traditions of a pre-historic period are more valuable than those of times concerning which we have abundance of well-authenticated information; for they furnish all the light we can have to aid us in our search for truth through those far-off years, so dark to us, and yet so deeply interesting; because we do know that, at that time, Christians who had derived their faïth and knowledge through the Apostles and Disciples of

[2] "Cyclopædia of English Literature." Edited by Robert Chambers.

our Divine Master, were diligently sowing the blessed seed over the field of the world.

There is said to have been a little church near Glastonbury, in which primitive Christians assembled long before the Saxon Conquest made part of our island England, the land of the Angles[3].

NOTE III. p. 22.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE ROMANS FROM BRITAIN, A.D. 410 TO A.D. 426.

The so-called Romans were, as we have seen, the Romanized of many races. When the Emperor Honorius acknowledged the independence of Britain, the Roman legions were withdrawn, and the Romans departed in large numbers; for, being a military rather than an agricultural people, they did not generally take deep root in the soil of the subjugated provinces over which they had spread themselves. But many Roman families remained in the towns, and their descendants formed a considerable portion of the population in Saxon times.

NOTE IV. p. 40.

We have a description of the Men of Kent written by William Lambarde, an eminent lawyer, who travelled through the county in Queen Elizabeth's time. He wrote: "The people of this countrie con-

[3] See "The First English Church," a small book describing a photograph of the church. By the Rev. Charles Boutell, M.A. Published by Mason, Brighton.

sisteth chiefly, as in other countries also, of the gentrie and the yeomanrie, of which the first be, for the most part, governors, and the others governed. Whose possessions, also, were at the first distinguished by the names of Knight's-fee and Gavelkind; the former being proper to the warrior, and the latter to the husbandman. But these tenures have been so indifferently mixed and confounded in the hands of eche sorte, that there is not now any mote of difference to be gathered by them. The Yeomanry is no where more free and jolly than in this shyre: for besides that they themselves say in a clayme made by them in the time of King Edward the First, that the communaltie of Kent was never vanquished by William the Conqueror, but yeelded itself by composition; and, besides, Gervasius affirmeth that the forward in all battels belongeth to them, it is agreed by all men, that there were never any bondmen or villaines, as the law calleth them, in the county of Kent. . . . .

"Copyhold tenure is rare in Kent, and tenant right not heard of at all, but in place of these, the custome of Gavelkind prevailing every where, in manner every man is a freeholder, and hath some part of his own to live upon. And in this their estate they please themselves and joy exceedingly. To be short, they be most commonly civil, just, and bountiful, so that the estate of the old Franklins and Yeomen of England either yet liveth in Kent, or else is quite dead, and departed out of the realm for altogether."—From "A Perambulation in Kent; Description, Hystorie, and Customes of the Shyre." By William Lambarde: first published 1576; republished 1826.

Almost the whole of Kent is still subject to Gavelkind tenure, the inhabitants of that county having obtained

concessions from William the Conqueror, by the effect of which they were able to retain their ancient liberties; and although Gavelkind is to be found in other parts of the kingdom, yet no doubt this was a part of those liberties. Its three principal properties are these:—First, The owner of Gavelkind land can part with his estate at the age of fifteen; secondly, the estate is not forfeited in case of attainder for felony; thirdly, the lands descend to all the sons, equally divided, and the daughters have their portion in the inheritance.

In Bagshaw's "History of Kent," published in 1847, we read:—"All lands lying in this county are presumed to be held on Gavelkind tenure, till the contrary be made appear. It is laid down as a rule, that nothing but an Act of Parliament can change the nature of Gavelkind lands; and this has occasioned the passing of several Acts for the disgavelling of the possessions of divers gentlemen in this county."

NOTE V. p. 60.

ON THE MODE OF TRAVELLING.

Carriages were very scarce throughout the Saxon period. The sketches represent them as fantastically formed, miniature likenesses of the ancient chariots, so small as to hold only one or two persons; and these conveyances were probably introduced after Queen Bertha's time. The cars, or wagons, of wickerwork or wood, used for agricultural purposes, were also used for moving the sick and aged.

NOTE VI. p. 107.

THE FIRST TWO BISHOPS OF HIBERNIA.

The famous St. Patrick, called the Apostle of Ireland, was the second Bishop of Hibernia. The first Bishop of that diocese was Palladius Patricius. The former name was probably that of his family, as there was a family of distinction in Gaul who bore that name: some of its members attained high positions in the Gallican Episcopate. A family would sometimes adopt a particular name, although a surname did not belong to a family in the legal and hereditary way in which it now does. Patricius was either a Christian name, or one that might be added to the Christian name, which was the custom before surnames were generally used. It was a favourite name, which signified rank, and was often given to high-born children. Patrick was the Irish abbreviation of Patricius; and the great number of Patricks mentioned in the early period of Irish history is a source of great embarrassment.

The same cause has confused the lives of the two Bishops. Dr. Todd says,—"It will assist very materially to clear up the difficulties and contradictions in the history of Patrick the Apostle, if we can disentangle from the story of his early life those particulars which belong in reality to the Palladian Patrick."

Palladius certainly studied at Lerins, was consecrated by Pope Celestin, and appointed to the new bishopric of Hibernia, which however soon became vacant by his untimely death. An old writer says, that the first Patrick lived "but a few days" after he became Bishop,

Dr. Todd thinks those words must not be taken literally, but they mean, no doubt, a short time. The second Patrick says of his predecessor, "God gave him no fruit of his labours."

In an ancient MS. called "The Annotations of Tirecham," these passages occur,—"Palladius, the Bishop, is first sent, who by another name is called Patricius, who suffered martyrdom among the Scots, as ancient saints relate. . . . . Then Patricius the Second is sent by the angel of God named Victor, and by Pope Celestin, in whom all Hibernia believed, and who baptized almost the whole of it."

Dr. Todd gives this extract, but tells us, however, that, on the whole, he does not see unquestionable proof that the St. Patrick who attained world-wide renown was sent from Rome to Ireland by Pope Celestin, therefore he rejects the story.

As the ancient "Life of St. Patrick," preserved in the "Book of Armagh," wants the first leaf, we cannot say, with absolute certainty, that it does not contain a notice of St. Patrick's Mission from Pope Celestin. But the story told, in what still remains of this venerable record, is scarcely consistent with such a notice. It represents Patrick as having seen an angelic vision, in which the same angel who had frequently before appeared to him when he was a captive in Ireland, was again seen by him. The angel announced that the time was come when he was to go forth to fish with evangelic net, amid the fierce and barbarous nations whom God had sent him to teach; and that the sons and daughters of the wood of Fochlut were calling for him to come and save them. He was then apparently in France, with St. Germain, and immediately set out

to do the work for which he was before prepared, namely, the work of the Gospel[4].

The question whether Patrick had, or had not, his mission from Rome, can be of but little importance. "The Rome of the fifth century was not guilty of the abuses which rendered the Reformation necessary in the sixteenth. If we acknowledge, as we must do, the Roman Mission of Palladius, as well as the Roman mission of Augustine of Canterbury, it is difficult to see what is to be gained by denying the Roman mission of Patrick[5].

NOTE VII. p. 136.

ON THE DATE OF ETHELBERT'S MARRIAGE.

"Ethelbert appears to have ascended the throne about the year 560, and probably about ten years after, he married Bertha. Tuett considers that the marriage must have taken place about the year 570. This is not unlikely, as Ethelbert was young when he came to the throne, and it required a few years to obtain that importance which rendered him an eligible match for a Frankish princess[6]."

NOTE VIII. p 140.

The names of Martin and Radigund were brought to this country by Queen Bertha.

[4] "A Memoir of St. Patrick." By J. H. Todd, D.D.

[5] See the Preface to "A Memoir of St. Patrick." By J. H. Todd, D.D.

[6] See "The Anglo-Saxon Church." By Henry Soames, M.A.

Martin's name has never been forgotten in Christendom: his disciples carried it to many lands; one of them, St. Peran, converted the ancient Britons of Cornwall; and St. Patrick, as we have seen, bore Martin's name to Ireland. But the Saxons had swept away every thing belonging to the true religion from the conquered country.

NOTE IX. p. 160.

We have a full description of Richborough Castle, as it existed in the reign of Henry VIII. Leland, who visited the spot, tells us that a hermit who lived among the ruins, showed him a cave where men had dug for treasure, and of which the conies (rabbits) had since taken possession. He also pointed out a block of stone or marble near the postern gate, which is still to be seen, though now worn perfectly smooth. Of that stone Leland wrote :—"*In the north side of the Castel, ys a hedde in the walle, now sore defaced with wether, they cawle it Queen Bertha's hedde.*"

We have another account of Richborough, from a traveller who saw it in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Vestiges of the old Roman city of Rutupiæ could be traced, and the castle was a noble, stately ruin.

There is a local tradition concerning a large idol of solid gold, which is supposed to have stood in or near the Saxon Cemetery, about two miles from the Castle. The little hamlet which has risen on that site is called Gilton, or Guilton; and so strong is the belief in that tradition at the present day, that on application being recently made for permission to dig on some land adjoining that portion which had been previously excavated, it was granted, with the distinct stipulation,

that if the golden idol should be discovered, it should be held as the property of the owners of the estate[7].—

NOTE X. p. 181.

ON CANONIZATION.

"The power of canonizing the dead was not at first confined to the Pope; it was exercised by the Metropolitans of different national Churches, but, with so little discrimination, that the world was likely to be inundated with Saints, some of whom were of rather questionable holiness. Therefore, about the middle of the twelfth century, Pope Alexander III. declared canonization to be one of "those greater causes which belonged to the Roman See alone[8]."

NOTE XI. p. 187.

Fingal's Cave was discovered by Sir Joseph Banks in the August of 1772. It is an immense cavern hollowed by the incessant labours of the strong Atlantic. The polygonal basaltic columns give a curiously architectural effect to this beautiful work of nature.

"Nature herself, it seems, would raise
A Minster to her Maker's praise."

The little island of Iona is just visible from the entrance of the cave; it is seen in blue distance on the southern horizon.

[7] See "A Corner of Kent." By J. R. Planché, Esq., Rouge Croix Poursuivant.

[8] Hook—"Lives of the Archbishops."

NOTE XII. p. 221.

In digging the foundation for the rebuilding of St. Paul's after its destruction by the great fire of London, a vast cemetery was found. First lay the Saxons, in graves lined with chalk-stones, or in coffins of hollowed stone; beneath them had been the bodies of the Britons, laid in rows. Their place was marked by an abundance of ivory and boxen pins, about six inches long, supposed to have fastened the shrouds in which the bodies were wrapped. These, perishing, left the pins entire. In the same row, but deeper, were Roman urns, and lacrymatories, or small glass bottles, in which the tears of the bereaved were buried beside the ashes of the dead. Other vessels were found in earthenware and glass, some of which still retained exquisite beauty of form and colour, and some were inscribed with the names of deities and heroes. Fragments of sacrificial vessels were found, and the coins of different emperors, among them those of Constantine the Great. See "Pennant's London."

NOTE XIII. pp. 227 and 285.

THE DISPUTE ABOUT THE TIME FOR KEEPING EASTER.

The Council of Nice fixed the date of the Pascal solemnities for the Sunday after the full moon of the vernal equinox; and that date was received by all the Churches. The Church of Alexandria afterwards discovered an astronomical error in this calculation, and introduced the more exact one. The conse-

quence was, that for a time there was a month's difference between Easter at Alexandria and Easter at Rome. In the sixth century Rome also perceived the error of the day fixed by the Council of Nice, and made the alteration likewise, thenceforth the difference between the Roman and Alexandrian Easter ceased to exist. But the Saxon invasion had interrupted the ordinary intercourse between the Continental and the British Churches; the latter retained the ancient Roman usage, and argued against the more exact computation that Augustine and the Italian monks brought with them, but which the British rejected as suspicious novelties, to receive which would be to insult the traditions of their fathers[9].

NOTE XIV. p. 252.

DRESS OF THE ARCHBISHOP.

In the Harleian collection is an illumination from an ancient missal of St. Augustine, in which the saint is represented as receiving a book of prayers from Abbot Elfnoth, who died in 980. The costumes, therefore, belong to that period, and not to the times of Augustine, but it seems to be the earliest illustration of the episcopal dress which we possess—and it is thus described by Fairholt in his "Costumes in England." "Augustine wears the chasuble, a purple mantle, bordered with gold, which covers the upper part of the body. Over this is the pall, a narrow strip of woollen cloth, upon which crosses were embroidered, and which was passed over the shoulders of the Metropolitan or Archbishop. Immediately under the cha-

[9] Montalembert.

suble is the dalmatica (coloured yellow in the original) which has long loose sleeves. The undermost part of the dress being the blue alb, with tight sleeves fitting to the wrist. His shoes are black, and he wears no mitre, its first appearance in the Latin Church being about the middle of the eleventh century." St. Augustine is always represented with his hair cut to form the coronal tonsure of the Western Church.

NOTE XV. p. 261.

Bede tells us that Laurentius, being quite disheartened by the apostasy of the king and people of Kent, determined to follow Mellitus and Justus, who had abandoned their sees and fled to France. Laurentius prepared to depart, but being very unhappy, he sought to comfort himself by spending the last night in prayer, and ordered his bed of straw or rushes to be strewed for him in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. In the dead of the night he was awakened by the Prince of the Apostles, who appeared to him, and with apostolical authority sternly demanded of Laurentius what he meant by deserting the flock which had been committed to his care. St. Peter rebuked the Archbishop for his cowardice in being so ready to leave the sheep in the midst of wolves; he then gave Laurentius a severe scourging, and left him bleeding and penitent.

As soon as it was morning, the Archbishop repaired to the king, told him what had happened, and showed his lacerated body.

Eadbald was exceedingly astonished and terrified; and, fearing lest St. Peter's next visit should be to himself, he forthwith renounced his unholy marriage, professed Christianity, begged Laurentius not to leave

the kingdom, and bitterly reproached himself for having violated the precepts and disregarded the example of his father[1].

Some historians, commenting on this story, assume that Laurentius conquered the stubborn will of the superstitious king by deceiving him; and there are those who, taking that view, try to vindicate such unworthy deception. But Dr. Hook treats the tale itself as "a lie," invented in a succeeding age, and related to Bede, who believed it to be true[2].

That Ethelbert had married again after Queen Bertha's death, appears from the allusion to his widow in Bede's account of Eadbald's reign. But the name of the second wife is nowhere mentioned, and the marriage must have taken place when the king was old and infirm, very shortly before his death.

NOTE XVI. p. 261.

A LEGEND OF SEBERT.

The most ancient tomb in Westminster Abbey is pointed to as the tomb of Sebert, King of the East Saxons, who is said to have built the first sacred edifice which rose upon that site. The rude stone coffin seems really to belong to the early Saxon times.

There is a curious legend, which relates that Sebert, having completed that little church on Thorny Island, desired Mellitus to consecrate it. The Bishop of London accordingly proceeded thither, accompanied by the clergy and monks in procession, and followed by a great concourse of people. While they were yet

[1] Bede, 2—6.

[2] "Lives of the Archbishops."

afar off from the spot, they observed a brilliant light beaming through the trees beyond the tranquil river, and, on arriving at the little church, they beheld a wonderful sight. St. Peter had already consecrated it, in the presence of a multitude of shining angels.

We do not know who invented this poetical legend, but certainly it was received as historical truth, and it continued to be believed after Sebert's church had been destroyed by the Danes; for when Edward the Confessor, having erected a second church on the same site, granted a new charter, he therein recited the account of the miraculous consecration of the first building, and of its destruction by the Danes, and concluded by declaring the motives which prompted him to restore and endow it.

THE END.

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